LPA DISTRICT 12 1980 - 1981

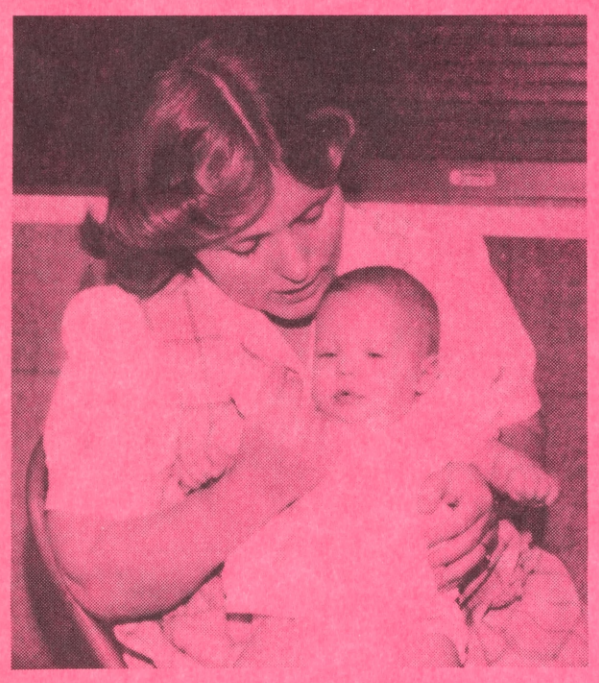
Creator – Harriet Stickney

S12122

S12122

GOLF TOURNAMENT 1979--NATIONAL CONVENTION QUEEN, MARY TOTARO, WITH BILLY BARTY

BROTHER ALAN & SISTER STACIE--NICHOLS, THAT IS . . .



MRS. MARK GRIMM WITH BABY DAUGHTER, ELLEN . . .

HALLOWEEN SCARIES--L. TO R. (back row): DAVID BROWN, MONIQUE HAMILTON: (front): MICHELLE STONE, AND BRAD GAYLEY.

WANTED: LITTLE PEOPLE FOR MOVIE BEING PRODUCED . . NEED TO LOOK AGE OF LATE 20's.

MAIL: PHOTOS AND RESUME TO:

Scott Yagemann
12843 Kling St., Apt. 107
Studio City, CA 91604

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS:

1	Art Boursse, Mickey Rosenberg
3	Jennie Cohen, Brian Orenstein
7	Betty Stewart
10	Mel Rossi, Jr.
11	Felix Silla
14	Bob Aries, JoAnn Norvell
16	Chuckles Pedersen
18	Angelo Rossitto, Heather Garman
22	Nancy Matthews
23	June Aguiar
24	Marjorie Alden, J.C. Schlais
25	Susan DeVries
28	Dwight Kendall
29	Novella Cockrell

MARCH BIRTHDAYS:

1	Barbara Footer
3	Yvonne Boursse
4	Lois Search
8	Ingrid Ingalls, Butch Wilhelm
11	Patty Maloney
13	Dixi Rossi, Philip Ingalls (Aux)
17	Chuck Secor
18	Diana McCarthy (Aux)
19	Nerses Melkonian, Joy Campbell
22	Sherrie Bratcher
26	Denise Sparling
27	Daniel Artran
31	Toni Cox

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARIES ... The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, a division of the US Library of Congress, is now lending free recorded summaries of all legislation introduced in Congress aimed at aiding handicapped people. For more information, write: Production Section, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Washington, DC 20542.

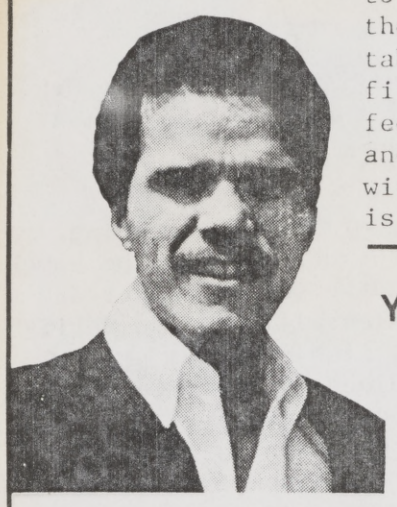
Left to Right: Michael Gogin, Patty Maloney, George Moore--looking over Golf Tournament Brochure, Via Verde Country Club.

SHIRLEY R. HARPER, EDITOR
LOS ANGELES CHAPTER NEWSLETTER
LITTLE PEOPLE OF AMERICA
1522 S. CENTINELA, #15
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90025

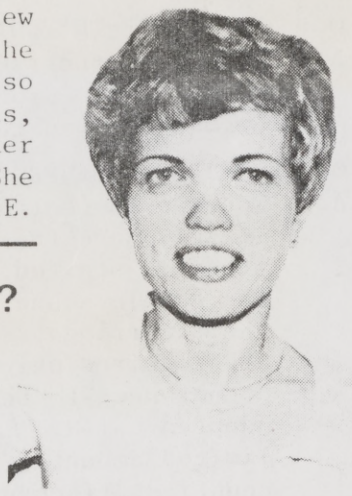
HAPPY VALENTINES DAY!!

FIRST CLASS MAIL--RETURN ADDRESS REQUESTED

The Stickneys
Box 633
San Bruno, CA 94066



Here is another article of general interest to the LPA membership. We hope this one and the others have been helpful. This interview takes place with CHARLES SECOR, who spent the first 5½ years of his life in an orphanage, so feels the importance of an article such as this, and SANDY ETCHINSON, LPA member, a Social Worker with Ventura County, in charge of Adoptions. She is a mother of two daughters, SHELLY and STACIE.



You Want To Add To Your Family?

'ADOPT'

Q. ARE THERE ANY DWARFED CHILDREN UP FOR ADOPTION?

A. Yes, right now Teri Bacall from Children's Home Society of Minnesota has 2 children she is looking for homes for. One child is an 18-month old female achondroplastic dwarf who is full Korean. The other is a 7½ year old boy who is a dyastrophic dwarf, and who is also full Korean. If you are interested in either child, contact Teri at 2230 Como Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108. (If you're interested in adopting, check yellow pages of your phone book as both public and private agencies are listed.)

Q. WHY DO PEOPLE WANT TO ADOPT A CHILD?

A. They are unable to conceive their own children. They are infertile due to endrometriosis, low sperm count, hysterectomy, etc. They may only be able to have one child and don't want to raise an only child. They want their child to enjoy a sibling relationship. They enjoy parenting and have a lot to offer an adopted child. They are rescuers, and want to provide a home for a needy child.

Q. WHAT KINDS OF ADOPTIONS ARE THERE?

A. There is an agency (public or private) adoption. A social worker counsels with the Birth Parents concerning their alternatives (abortion, establishing a home themselves, temporary foster care, or relinquishment). Usually another social worker interviews the adoptive applicant. If the Birth Parent voluntarily relinquishes, or if the Birth Parent's parental rights are terminated, and the child is freed to be adopted, the agency makes a match between the adoptive parents and the child keeping the child's best interests at heart. The agency remains the child's guardian until the adoption is finalized. The fee is $500 for the couple, which can be waived or reduced, depending upon their income. An independent adoption usually involves a doctor who is caring for the pregnant woman. The Birth Parent consents to the child being placed with the couple. The couple usually pays the medical expenses of the Birth Parent and child. Sometimes the couple pays the Birth Parent a maintenance allowance during her pregnancy. The couple hires an attorney who will file a petition for them to adopt. The State or County social worker does a home study on the couple. The Birth Parent has 45 days from the date the petition is filed to change their mind and reclaim the child. If the Birth Parent does not reclaim the child, the couple adopts the child. The Birth Parent often does not receive any counseling about their alternatives so are more often prone to change their minds and reclaim their child. The cost is several thousands of dollars to the adoptive couple. An intercountry adoption is when an agency in the United States is involved with a liaison agency overseas, such as in Korea, Chile, or the Philippines. The Country Agency does the adoptive home study and sends it to the liaison agency who then makes a match with a child. The information on the child is sent to the County Agency to be shared with the couple who will then decide if they want to accept the child. If so, their acceptance is telegramed to the liaison agency. After visa approval is obtained, the child is allowed to come to the U.S. Approximate cost--$2500 - $3000.

Q. WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN WHO ARE WAITING TO BE ADOPTED?
A. In other countries, the children are in orphanages, or in foster homes. In the U.S., there are no orphanages, so the children are placed in foster homes or group homes. Occasionally a child is placed directly from the hospital.

Q. WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES TO ADOPT THROUGH AN AGENCY?
A. You should contact the local adoption agency about their next orientation meeting, if they have them. You should ask how to go about applying to adopt. When the home study is started, there will be at least 4 interviews between the social worker and the couple - one interview will take place in the home. Couples will need to verify their marriage, employment, military service discharge, etc. Also physical exams are required which will include X-rays for TB and serology (blood tests). Couples do not need to be rich, but should have enough income to support themselves and the adopted child. In some cases, financial assistance for the child can be given for a limited amount of time. The couple does not have to own their own home. In some counties, fingerprints are required. Criminal records will be considered on an individual basis, depending upon the nature of the offense. Four character references are required. They cannot be related to you, and should have been acquaintances for two or more years.

Q. ARE THERE MANY CHILDREN WAITING TO BE ADOPTED?
A. No. The children waiting are Black, Hispanic, physically handicapped, developmentally delayed, or are over the age of 10. Healthy Anglo children 0-10 are usually placed without any difficulty. Children over the age of 10 could have some behavioral/emotional problems.

Q. CAN COUPLES HAVE BIOLOGICAL CHILDREN AND STILL ADOPT?
A. Yes, but newborn to three-year olds are usually placed with childless couples unless they are Black or Hispanic, or other minority couples, because fewer of them apply to adopt than do Anglo.

Q. CAN SINGLE PARENTS ADOPT?
A. Yes, but preference is given to two-parent homes unless the child would do better in a one-parent home. Infants and toddlers are usually not placed with single parents.

Q. SHOULD YOU INFORM YOUR CHILD THAT HE IS ADOPTED?
A. Definitely, and the earlier the age the better. The child would probably find out from someone else anyway, and would feel that his adoptive parents were dishonest with him. He might feel that if they are dishonest about that, they were also dishonest about other things. The are several ways you can discuss adoption with a child. You can tell him a bedtime story using his adoption as the subject matter. He'll love being the central character and knowing how special and chosen he was! You can make up a scrapbook about the adoption using pictures that were taken the day you picked him up from the agency. Or, you can purchase one of the adopted child baby-books (Hallmark publishes an excellent one). Also, there is an excellent book for children, "Why Was I Adopted?" It's important that the child himself feel good about being adopted so that he can respond in a positive way when others ask "You're adopted? How come your parents didn't want you and gave you away?"

Q. DO JUST OLDER CHILDREN REACT WHEN THEY ARE PLACED IN THEIR NEW ADOPTIVE HOME?
A. No, toddlers react, too. They often are afraid that the home is not a permanent one and that they will have to move again. Often they put the blame on themselves for the move, thinking they did something "bad". They miss their Birth Parents, or their Foster Parents, and want to return to their "old house". They are usually on their best behavior for a short period of time until they get settled into the new routine and feel its safe to misbehave or be themselves. They go through a period of adjustment which can span a number of months so its important that the adoptive couple show a great deal of patience and understanding.

NOTE: LPA HAS ITS OWN ADOPTION LIAISON--FRIEDA VALUCKAS--WHO IS AWARE OF ADOPTABLE DWARF CHILDREN. YOU CAN CONTACT HER: 5302 E. 138TH ST., TACOMA, WA 98446. PHONE: (206) 531-2876.

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2

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Photos by S. K. M.

1. Chapter Secretary, Mary Lou Sberna; Nat'l Membership Chairman, Daniel Margulies
2. Lori and Shirley Barty--Shirley did the shamrock, & design, 1st page.
3. Ring those Bells--Patti & Bob--Bob's our former Treasurer.

1. Heather Garman, and Miss Pamela Ybarra--Chapter Vice President.
2. Two LPA "Queens"--Judy Byzewski, and Dolores Carillo.
3. Good friends--Frances Ybarra and Billy Barty.

Some of us boated (well, anyway, it was raining!) out to the POMONA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS on SUNDAY, MARCH 2--for the first annual BILLY BARTY FOUNDATION COOK-OFF! Yes, it rained going out, it rained while we were there, and it rained on the way home! (Reminded me of Oregon...) Because of the weather, the crowd was not as large as anticipated, but many chili-cookers were there getting it all together for the 4:00 p.m. judging! There was musical entertainment--and HERVE VILLACHAIZE from FANTASY ISLAND! HERVE spent a great deal of time in assisting in preparing chili--it was nice to be able to talk with him for a bit, and see him for real. Oh, yes, almost forgot to tell you--our own BILLY BARTY was there, too! . . JOHN AND GREG RICE, twins, from West Palm Beach, Florida were the keynote speakers at the CAPH District Convention at the Pacifica Hotel, Saturday night, March 8. John and Greg were featured on "REAL PEOPLE" some of us will remember. They are realtors from Florida . . . TONY COX says he has a part in an upcoming movie, "Dr. Heckyle and Mr. Hype" . . . he will portray a bad guy--BAD WILLIAM, and will find himself in jail, etc. Gentle Tony, playing a bad guy??!! We have been seeing more of Tony around lately--good!

- -

THE BILLY BARTY FOUNDATION SUPPORTS THE LITTLE PEOPLE OF AMERICA--WE THANK YOU, BILLY, FOR THE SUPPORT YOUR FOUNDATION HAS BEEN TO THE CHAPTER HERE...

BIRTHDAYS FOR APRIL

2 Robert Dow
3 Dorothy Henderson
8 Patti Bell, Sallie Baginski
10 Pat Mason
15 Colleen Bell, Michael Cockrell, Priscilla Maltbie
18 Martin Yturralde
19 Shirley Rosenberg
21 Matthew DeLuca
22 Georgia Guild
23 David Brookfield, Tracy Kuhl
24 Joe Gieb
25 Eddie Aguilar
26 Dorothy Doty
28 Maurice Alden
30 Brian Luna

(I am whistling the birthday song to all of you--do you hear it??)

SUNSET HOUSE deserves our thanks this month as they gave us a generous donation for the ad we placed in our NOVEMBER CHAPTER NEWSLETTER. It all started with CHUCK SECOR talking to SHIRLEY HARPER's neighbor, MAUREEN O'HAGAN, who works for SUNSET HOUSE. MAUREEN spoke to MARTY FRENCH, Director of Personnel, and out of this came an ad for us. BUD PARKER, a good friend and neighbor, worked hard at getting up the ad. We put it in but not a soul responded! They were disappointed at SUNSET HOUSE as they really did want to employ some little friends. A letter is being written to MARTY FRENCH, thanking them for their contribution.

...NATIONAL CONVENTION DATES.....
...JULY 21-25--HOTEL PACIFICA.....
...CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA.....

SHIRLEY R. HARPER, Editor
LOS ANGELES CHAPTER NEWSLETTER
LITTLE PEOPLE OF AMERICA
1522 S. CENTINELA, #15
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90025

FIRST CLASS MAIL--RETURN ADDRESS REQUESTED

The Stickneys
Box 633
San Bruno, CA 94066

MAR 23, 1980

The Union's

Sunday Showcase

A short story about little people

Harriet and Al Stickney have known Robbie, a 12-year-old from Napa, since he was 4. The Stickneys help parents accept their drawfed children and live normally.

Cindy Mitchell, 22, drove from L.A. for the Little People's Convention, where at least 40 members were expected by this morning.

By HILARY ABRAMSON
Staff Writer

Baby woman. Puppet. Midget. Muppet. Joy Cambell knows the names. Ditto for Pam Kendall, Marylou Sberna, Harriet and Al Stickney, and Cindy Mitchell.

They're dwarfs. In some cases, the results of new genetic mutations. In all instances, used to the stares, the names. So they came to Hotel El Rancho this weekend to meet and re-meet each other and show who they really are. The occasion was a state convention of Little People of America, a national organization for people 4 feet, 10 inches and under.

"UNTIL YOU CAN look in the mirror and accept yourself and say, 'I am a dwarf,' you won't be in this organization."

Harriet Stickney, 54, has a lot to say about size. She and her husband Al, 50, traveled from San Bruno to do so. Their job with the organization is to counsel parents of dwarfed or very short children. Medicine does not know why it happens. And it usually happens to parents of average height.

"When you find out you have a dwarfed child, it's a difficult time because you blame yourself," says Harriet. "We tell them to accept it and get on with it. What bothers us is that the ones who should be here aren't. They may be hiding away; they haven't accepted themselves or their children."

There could be hundreds of categories of dwarfism, according to Dr. Bagher Sheikholislam, an endocrinologist with the Sacramento Medical Center who would agree with the Stickneys.

"I tell parents to consider the age of the child, not the height," he says. "Short people will have different problems than giants. A dwarf constantly sees him or herself as inferior. That's because many times their feedback has been people treating them as immature, not appropriate for their age. It's the opposite for tall people, who somehow have great expectations of them most of their lives."

THE AVERAGE HEIGHT for the American male is 5 feet, 8 inches, and is 5 feet, 4 inches for the female, according to the endocrinologist.

Al Stickney is 4 feet, 6 inches. He's one of the tallest in his organization and usually stands in the back row for picture taking sessions.

"My father was in the Army and we moved around a lot," he recalls. "He was 6 feet tall, my mother was 5 feet, 4 inches. I was the youngest of three. My brother's 6 feet tall, my sister's 5 feet, 7 inches."

Staff Photos by Henry Au

Friends from Southern California, Pam Kendall (left) and Marylou Sberna each deal differently with stares or taunts. Pam gets angry. Marylou uses her sense of humor.

Al says he felt left out at high school dances, but he managed the school sporting team and "earned more athletic letters than anyone else." He knew he wasn't going to be taller. His family was realistic. The world wasn't as kind at first.

"I wanted to be an accountant and went to enroll in a Boston school that guaranteed you a job after graduation. They wouldn't accept me with that stipulation. So I went to aeronautic school and they told me if I could get through it, I could do anything."

Today, he is maintenance planner for United Airlines. Ironically, most members of Little People of America are accountants or bookkeepers, he says.

Harriet was a grade school teacher who used her voice to control children as tall as she. She believes strides made by the California Association of the Physically Handicapped such as lower water fountains, building access, have helped short people.

"We stand as tall as people in wheelchairs sit."

MOST OF THE convention goers had developed what Harriet calls "calluses" to the name calling, the whispers, the elbow pokes.

"I've always been shy," says Pam Kendall, 20, of Indio. "It bugs me when people laugh at me. Sometimes I just can't walk away from it. I get mad. I don't think they'd want people laughing at them. The children are fine — they're open. It's the parents who pull the kids

✔—To Page C14, Col 1

Little people learn to deal with world

✔—From Page C1

away who often bother me. But I'm getting better about it."

Pam was adopted when she was 1 year old by a dwarfed couple. She still can remember the day when she was working in a lawyer's office and a client asked if he could shake her hand since he heard touching a dwarf brings good luck. She complied. Today, she works in the insurance department of a large hospital.

"I play raquetball, I skate — I do everything you do, but maybe a little slower. I'm just shorter. People should just think of us as people. Short people."

PAM HATED Randy Newman's "Short People" song. She didn't know he intended to point out the awfulness of discrimination by the song. She heard the part about "their little cars go beep, beep, beep," and thought of the small car she drives.

Marylou Sberna, 20, of Palm Springs, is trying to help Pam be as extroverted as she is. At 4 feet, Pam is about two inches taller than her southern California friend.

"I was always popular," says Marylou. "I'm the only dwarf in my family. I have two younger sisters and all of us have always been close. Sure there were bullies in junior high. At our national convention every year, we have rap sessions that help a lot of people. At this point, the only advice I need is everyday love problem advice!"

Marylou uses her sense of humor to deflect cruelty or mere curiosity.

"I was once at this skating rink and this little kid asked where I came from. I told him I was the eighth dwarf of 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.' I could see him run over to his mother to tell her."

Pam would have liked to have been a police officer. Marylou is still a college student studying psychology and doesn't think her height should have anything to do with her assuming the career she wants.

THEY BOTH THINK about having children. Pam wants a big family and never really thought about the possibility of having dwarfed children if she marries another dwarf. (An endocrinological study a decade ago found that of 23 dwarfed couples, 17 had dwarfed offspring and six had average sized children.) Pam has made up her mind.

"I want children of an average size. Psychological problems can be overcome but I don't want my children to have the physical problems I've had. Right now, though, I date other short people."

Both young women had only average sized friends before they joined Little People of America. So did Joy Campbell, who grew up in Esparto. At 29, the coordinator of the convention appears to be totally at ease with her stature.

"I didn't even know I was dwarfed until I was 10," she says. "I was the middle of five normal sized kids and we were once visiting friends and I was getting into the car. My sister said something like, 'If she wasn't a midget, we wouldn't have to do this (whatever it was)' and it hit me. I looked down and said, 'Oh! That's what it is!' Then I went to the encyclopedia and started looking into it."

IF JOY'S PARENTS had listened to a doctor, she would have been locked away. He told them she would advance too slowly and wouldn't be of use, she says. They did the opposite, raising her as their other children. Today, she owns her own condominium, has a dog, a job, and says she's busy and happy.

"I was always popular. I credit the small town and warm family with my adjustment. There were no guys to date so I figured some day maybe I'd find one. I still would rather be alone than with a nerd — tall or short. Too many times people try to fix you up with another dwarf just because of your size, not considering your intelligence."

When Joy was 18, she read that Krofft Production Company was looking for little people to act for a children's TV show.Joy spent two years in L. A. with "H. R. Pufnstuf."

"I always prefer parents letting children ask me their questions than shushing them," she says. "I realize I'll probably always feel like a public relations person for others my size, but that's OK."

DWARFS USUALLY get the pity or the freak treatment, they say. Besides the run of the mill back problems they have, they say they're like anybody else.

"I'm not even aware of looking up at people," says Joy. "Only when they really bend down to talk to me am I aware. And then there are the ones who get down on their knees. That I can do without!"

BRITTLE BONES

SANTA ROSA PRESS DEMOCRAT
MARCH 25-1980

Handicapped student is full of ambition

—UPI

Fairfield High School drama teacher Bob Wagner coaches Stu Rodriguez, 15, aspiring comedian.

FAIRFIELD (UPI) — Stu Rodriguez, 15, wants to be a comedian " because they make good money." Once he's saved enough money, he wants to start his own radio station.

Rodriguez has enough ambition for two or three young men. His determined attitude and the fact he's been on the honor roll since he started his freshman year at Fairfield High School make his goal seem attainable.

If anything could put stumbling blocks in his way— and even that is questionable once you've met Rodriguez—it would be his handicap.

Rodriguez has a rare, hereditary disease called osteogenesis imperfecta, which makes bones brittle and subject to fractures. Before he was born, Rodriguez had 75 broken bones. Since then he has broken "it seems like 600," he said.

The fact he will be confined to a wheelchair the rest of his life doesn't seem to affect him.

Rodriguez' mother said sometimes he has to be placed in a body cast and taken out of school. "But he's always able to keep up with his schoolwork," she said.

"I try to keep my grades as high as I can," Rodriguez said. "If I didn't get straight A's, I wouldn't mind. It helps you get into college so I try to do what I'm supposed to do."

But Rodriguez' real love is performing. He participates in drama under the guidance of good friend and drama teacher Bob Wagner and will play a "little kid" in the high school's production of "Inherit the Wind."

"Life is like drama," Rodriquez said, "You're always acting. When you're by yourself, you act differently than when you're with other people. You're always going in and out of character."

He's probably better known around campus as a comedian, though. Every two or three weeks Rodriguez tries out his jokes in classes.

"The kids are very frank with him," Wagner said. "They tell him what works and what doesn't.

Wagner also scheduled him to appear between acts in the high school's earlier production of one act plays. He was an immediate success, with guaranteed standing ovations all four performance nights.

Most of Rodriguez' jokes, all original, would have to be rated "parental guidance only," and a few of them "almost got me in trouble," Wagner said.

Let us suffice to say that his Dolly Parton and Jimmy Carter jokes are worthy of the likes of Bob Hope or Robin Williams, two of his favorite comedians.

Hope is the ultimate performer to Rodriguez. "If you listen to what he's saying behind his breath, like in walks a guy with a turban and jewelry and Hope says, 'Wow! What's this guy smoking?' Those are nickel lines- you laugh harder," Rodriguez said.

Robin Williams may say the same thing, "but he says it so fast people can't keep up with him," Rodriguez said.

Lately he has been incorporating hats, rubber noses and various other props into his act. He'll be adding choreography, too, as soon as he figures out what his electric wheelchair will do.

Getting the wheelchair "was very strange," Rodriguez said. "All my life I had been sitting around with people pushing me. When I got the chair and felt the ground moving under me, and I was controlling it- it felt really good."

He may tell one "electric chair" joke during his routine, but he doesn't dwell on his handicap. And he tries to vary his material.

"You've got to ake everybody laugh," he sad. "not just your mother in the front row,"

The only problem his handicap causes is "that people don't want reality. They take it very differently at first when they see a handicapped comedian.

"But I'm just there to do what I'm good at, and if they can accept that, I don't ask anything else. Except that they laugh," he said.

THESE ARE.. SOME OF OUR LPA FRIENDS WE WANT YOU TO GET TO.. KNOW, TOO..

←

SUE AND GEORGE ROSSITTO--MISS OHIO AND MR. CALIFORNIA....

→

DAVID & CISSIE, SON, KEITH--PROUD PARENTS!!

LPA FRIENDS--FORMER CHAPTER PRESIDENT, BETTY STEWART, AND HARRY O. WANTY.

DAVID AND MIMI BECKER--OUR MOST RECENT WEDDED COUPLE!

TONY COX WITH FRIEND MONA AT OUR LAST MEETING IN CERRITOS.

CHAPTER TREASURER--MARILYN HOYT-- WITH RAY ARMSTRONG WHOM SHE BROUGHT TO HIS FIRST MEETING RECENTLY.

Spett.:
L. P. A.
Box 126
OWATONNA
MN 55060
U. S. A.

Sono un acondroplasico italiano, uno di quei tanti esseri nati un po' sfortunati, ho letto per caso su di una rivista l'articolo di cui allego fotocopia e quindi vi scrivo queste due righe per allacciare una corrispondenza e per conoscere meglio la vostra Lega. Unico mio problema è che non conosco l'inglese ed eventuali lettere le devo fare tradurre. Ma comunque l'importante come spero è riuscire a avere una corrispondenza.

Grazie per l'interessamento e in attesa porgo distinti saluti

Sangiovanni Vittorio
Via Ajaccio 4
20133 MILANO
ITALY

NANISMO

Sei piccolo? Pensa grande

Che un nano venga respinto se presenta domanda per essere arruolato fra i corazzieri del presidente della Repubblica costituisce, o no, una violazione del suo diritto costituzionale alla «parità di trattamento»? O, all'inverso, se il nanismo è un handicap, perché chi ne soffre non ha diritto a veder applicata la legge che garantisce «la non discriminazione nell'assunzione di persone minorate»?

La Lpa («Little People of America», la maggiore organizzazione del mondo che raccoglie i nani: il suo motto è «Pensa grande») ha dato il via a una campagna in favore dei suoi soci. I fondi raccolti saranno destinati alle ricerche mediche sul nanismo; si sa che la maggior parte dei nani è tale per «acondroplasia», una patologia determinata da una mutazione genetica ancora misteriosa che colpisce in media un nato ogni quarantamila (chi invece ha uno sviluppo limitato a causa di deficienze della pituitaria può già con le attuali conoscenze scientifiche venir guarito con la cura, in giovanissima età, di ormoni estratti dalla ghiandola pituitaria di persone normali).

No Small Wonder

by Laurie Brooks
and Layla Rezvan

Think of yourself and what you do everyday; whether it be going to your locker, buying your lunch, or just playing softball in P.E. What if you suddenly couldn't do any of these things or you had trouble doing them? Would you be able to adjust?

Most people take these everyday activities for granted and don't realize what it would be like not to be capable. For one special sixth grader, Michael Evans, these are problems he faces everyday.

"I don't have a lot of problems in class except for reaching things like the pencil sharpener."

"Michael is extremely well-adjusted," commented his core teacher, Mrs. Smith. "He fits right in and he's just one of the guys."

Outside, Michael experiences other difficulties such as steps and reaching the lunch counter or even his locker.

This is one determined sixth grader, though, who doesn't let anything get in the way of fun and enjoying himself. "I like all different sports, especially soccer and baseball," admitted Michael.

"He goes out and does everything he can with everyone else," commented Mr. Hitchcock, Michael's P.E. teacher.

Michael's attitude is also positive and upbeat: "Being small makes it hard to do some stuff, but I love myself and I'm happy."

4-30-80

HERB CAEN

OUR HERO: In a brave attempt to stop the horrid fad that is once again sweeping Middlebrow America, Mel Lapides of Mountain View has organized Pyramids Anonymous. To shake the habit, you put in $16 at the first meeting, $8 at the second, $4 at the next, then $2, and finally $1 at the last session, when you are presumably cured. One really addicted Pyramider from Fremont is into his second month of treatment, starting at $1024; he is the exception, but deemed curable ... Robert Bitton, the tiny-tiny owner of Restaurant Robert on Octavia, and his tall-tall wife, Maribeth, are the parents of a son named Sylvain, who checked in last wk. at 7 lbs. 13 ounces and 20 inches long. This caused Model B. J. McAllister to exclaim, "That's bigger than Robert!" ... While waiting in line at Crocker Bank, Christine Pendleton of P'Alto noticed a sizeable cardboard carton labeled "Misplaced Debt Transmittals," and asks, "Should I worry?" Another case for the Crocker Spaniel ... That one-time Broadway bombshell (not Carol) is in UC Med Center for treatment of what Joan Rockwell calls "the San Francisco social disease" — alcoholism. But it's not funny.

★ ★ ★

IN CASE YOU missed it, Dr. Mel Feldman, the children's dentist, was heard to say cheerily on Station KEAR, "Honor thy uppers and thy lowers, for if you are not true to your teeth, they will be false to you!" ... Most of the town's trad pianists will be at the Wash. Sq. Barngrill tonight to honor Norma Teagarden on her 70th ... Marriage notice in the Aberdeen, Wash., World: "Gay-Queer." That would be Henry Queer and Coleen Gay, and good luck to this fine young couple ... Jim Hartman spotted it in Santa Barbara — a bumper sticker reading "Teddy Is a Nice Chapp." And in Calif., his campaign is going swimmingly.

Little People of America (LPA)
Box 633
San Bruno, Calif. 94066
(415) 589-0695

Handicapping Conditions Served: Dwarfism.

The Organization: Little People of America (LPA) was established in 1957 as a nationwide organization for dwarfs to provide fellowship, an interchange of ideas, solutions to the problems unique to the little person, and moral support. A special membership division provides opportunities for information exchange and group support to parents of dwarfed children. Twelve district directors coordinate local activities, regional and local meetings, and informal local gatherings; LPA conducts national meetings annually. LPA works closely with adoption agencies throughout the U.S., attempting to place dwarfed children in the homes of dwarfed parents. In 1968, LPA established a foundation to raise funds for vocational training of little people and medical and scientific research on the causes and possible treatment of dwarfism.

Information Services: In addition to an organizational newsletter, LPA distributes printed materials on equipment and aids, clothing, and social and vocational adjustment. [redacted] s. *My Child is a Dwarf* is a pamphlet of special interest to parents. LPA's medical board is used as a referral network to respond to medically-related inquiries; general inquiries are sent to district directors for responses.

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LITTLE PEOPLE OF AMERICA
22ND NATIONAL CONVENTION
LOS ANGELES 1980

The Daily Breeze

Second Front Page

Sun., July 27, 1980 B1

The 'little people'

They're just like everyone else, but with 2 worlds — the big and the small

By Norma Meyer
Staff writer

Nineteen-month-old Neno Carlino is amused, then scared, then perturbed as he travels nine floors in a crowded elevator at the Pacifica Hotel crunched between a dozen pair of legs.

"He feels like we do in an elevator with normal-size people," jokes his 3-foot-5-inch mother to her surrounding peers.

For years, victims of dwarfism have been associated with Snow White's cutesy entourage or, worse, mysterious freaks in sideshows.

As children, they're called runts by school mates, and as adults, they're stopped in stores by inquisitive children and patronized or ignored by those ill at ease with them.

But in the last 15 years, little people (the name they prefer) have come a long way medically and emotionally. And that's why some 600 came together last week in Culver City for the 22nd annual Little People of America convention.

"We're the same as everybody else, except we live in two worlds — the big world and the small world," said 3-foot-9-inch actor Billy Barty, who in 1957 founded what is now a 5,000-member organization. "We can't hide from either world.

"There's a lack of knowledge about who we are and what we do. We've proved ourselves. We have college degrees and we're in all kinds of professions. Now we have to have the other world accept us."

Only difference is a few feet

There are about 100,000 Americans who are 4 feet 10 inches and shorter, Barty said. The medical term for them is dwarfs, although there are 80 syndromes of dwarfism.

But little people have normal intelligence and a normal lifespan; indeed, if there was one phrase mentioned by the little people in informal conversations with a visitor, it was "just like normal-size people."

Their main concern is to dispel myths that little people are incapable of functioning in a world where bigger always seems better. Look, they say, pointing at various members milling around the hotel lobby. There's an accountant, a mechanic, a steelworker, a teacher, a test engineer on a nuclear submarine.

Of course, this was a convention and hundreds of little people or parents and spouses of little people from throughout the country were there to socialize, too.

And as conventions go, this one was a dilly, with some heavy-handed politicking for the office of a new Little People of America president, trips to Disneyland and Beverly Hills homes, baseball games and arm wrestling, costume parties and fashion shows and job recruitment by government agencies and an insurance company (whose pamphlets scattered across a table read, "We are Growing").

"The main event here is social," said 24-year-old Deb Hecht from Indiana. "When you're dancing, it's a lot nicer to be able to look someone in the eye."

Barty recalled his own love story.

"I saw Shirley for about 10 minutes at the '60 Las Vegas convention. We were married two years later."

In between, however, there were workshops for parents, for teens, for the engaged and newly married, for the job-seeking.

"People think the only world left for the little people is show business," said Barty, who is supposed to begin rehearsal this week for the movie "Under the Rainbow."

"But only one percent of little people are in show business. The rest lead normal lives."

'Hi,'' interjected Mary Lou Matthews of Topeka, Kan., extending her hand. "I'm married to Shorty the Tailor but he couldn't come."

"We're a very positive-thinking organization," added Barty, as children (called "little littles") tugged at his shirt and slapped his hand in greeting.

Little people, says Lee Kitchens, former president of the organization, have learned to work around "inconvenient" barriers such as too-tall pay telephones, drinking fountains and steps.

Look on positive side

Cars? No problems, says Kitchens, who has four pairs of extenders for his car's brake and gas pedals, including one he carries in a briefcase while traveling.

Planes? Cinch, says Kitchens, who also has extenders for a small plane he and his wife owned.

Motorcycles? Snap, says Jack Carlino, who added extensions to his bike.

There are other barriers not so easy to conquer: the attitudes of bigger people. They often show up when a little person looks for employment.

"I've applied or interviewed for 125 jobs since January," said Jimmy Loyless, a 26-year-old sales manager from Atlanta.

"You have to stay psychologically motivated or it's easy to hit the skids. You have to work a little harder, try a little harder."

Shared experiences

At a convention workshop, a psychiatrist from County Harbor-UCLA Medical Center was speaking in vague terms about being assertive. Deal with things when they happen, don't let them build up, etcetera, etcetera.

It seemed like the post-breakfast blahs had overwhelmed the seminar until a middle-age little person raised his hand.

"What do you do with a patronizing response?" he asked Dr. James Brust. "When it's half-sympathetic, half-aggressive and you know that individual isn't sincere. Most usually its a potential employer."

Yea, came the resounding response from the awakened audience.

The experienced Loyless answered for the psychiatrist.

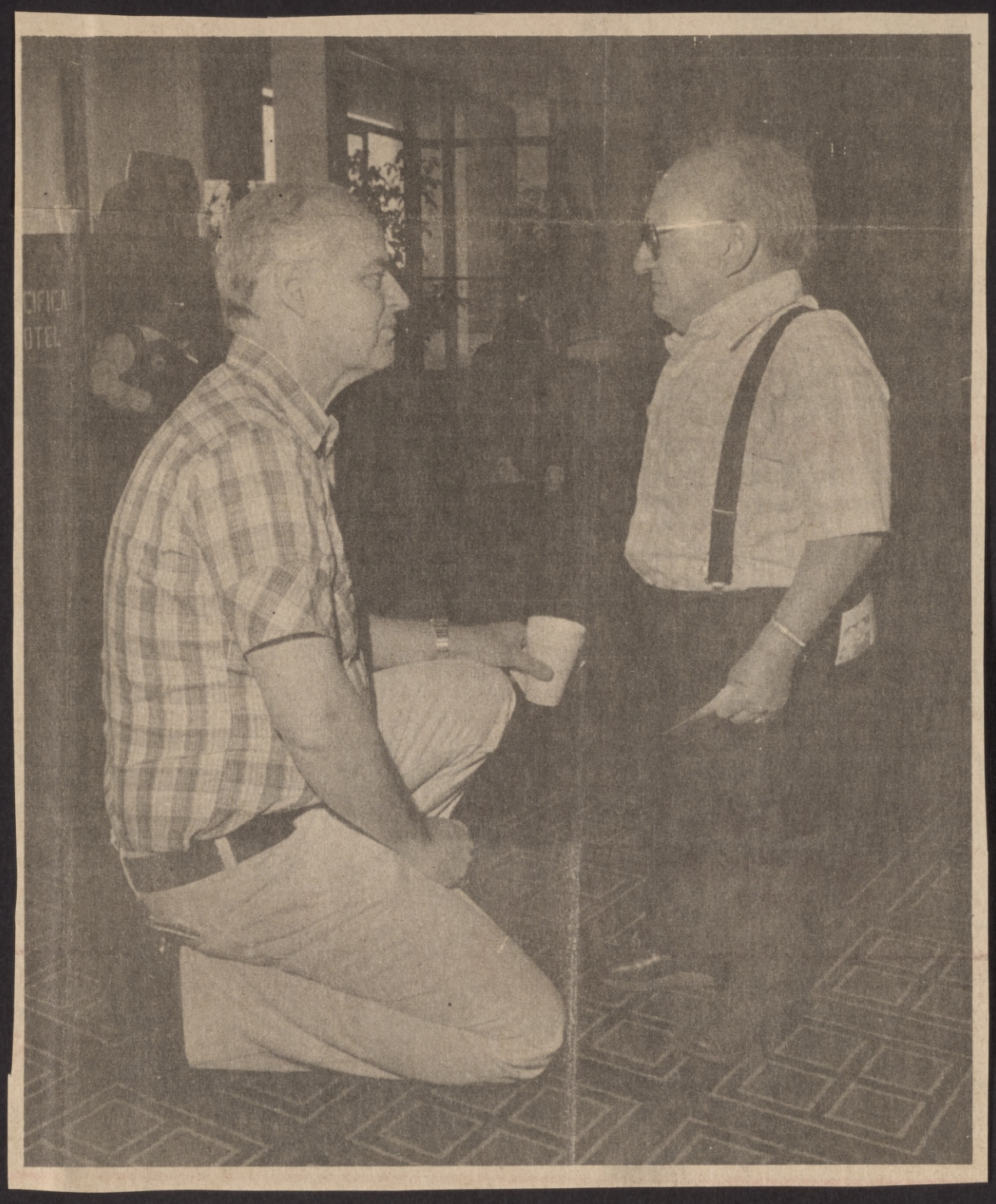
"If I'm getting the vibes that someone's uncomfortable with my short stature, it's better to say what you feel about yourself being of short stature," said Loyless in his calm Southern drawl. "He might want to know how you'll interact with coworkers, if you'll feel withdrawn after you're hired."

Dr. David Sillence of County Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, which has one of a dozen clinics nationwide researching and treating little people, said they can be divided into two groups.

Little — B2, col. 1

Jack Carlino, above, hoists son, Neno, for a better view. Below, a little person throws it to first base at convention softball game. And Ed Dailey, father of a little person, talks with actor Billy Barty. Dailey is down on one knee as a courtesy to Barty.

Photos by Dan Anderson and staff photographer Michael Steinbacher



Little

From page B1

Little people who have proportionate bodies generally suffer from a deficiency of a growth hormone, he said. Sometimes, hormone shots can stimulate growth.

Those with disproportionate bodies, such as larger heads and smaller limbs, suffer from a skeletal disorder. Knowledge of most of the causes as well as cures are years away.

Each of the 80 syndromes of dwarfism has its set of problems, such as speech and hearing difficulties, arthritis and other problems related to underdevelopment of the bones, said Dr. William Horton, a convention representative from the clinic at the University of Kansas Medical Center.

Children as dwarfs

Children are another problem.

Horton says some little people cannot conceive, while those with some other syndromes have a 50 percent chance of having a dwarf if they marry a dwarf and a 25 percent of having a little person if they marry someone of average stature.

Little people with growth hormone deficiencies rarely pass on dwarfism to their offspring, he said.

Intermarriage of some strains lessens the child's chances of survival.

"Doctors said we couldn't have a baby," said 23-year-old Jack Carlino, slinging blond, blue-eyed Neno over his shoulder. "That's the main thing that got us. We didn't believe what the medical records said."

"We were brought up to believe we could have anything we wanted," said Neno's mother, Ann.

"As long as we go for it," interrupted Carlino, who drives a forklift and carries heavy boxes in his job as a shipping clerk.

Psychiatrist Brust says many little people prefer to have little children because they feel they can control them better.

Said Kitchens, "The problem is when normal-sized people learn their child is a little person.

"Sure, they're not going to play football," said Kitchen, father of an adopted 20-year-old little person daughter and an adopted 24-year-old son who doctors misdiagnosed as a little person and now stands 5 feet 7.

"The parents will be constantly surprised what their kids can do if they're not treated special or like mascots or pets," Kitchen said.

Al Stickney, a little person, conducts a support group in San Francisco for average-size parents and average-size siblings of little people.

"There may be problems, especially if the little person is the oldest. They're no longer the big brother or sister," said Stickney, who was born to average-sized parents and has a sister 5 feet 8 inches tall and a nephew who is 6-feet-2.

Delores Vercellino, a bubbly, talkative little person, takes out a snapshot of her normal-size, 15-year-old son.

"See, those are my eyes," she said. "You should have seen me and my husband (also a little person) at the Portland convention with Jimmy when he was 5."

She giggles looking back on those times, but the smile briefly fades as she remembers others.

"Sure, there were times when everything would be OK at home with him and his friends and then we'd go out and he'd feel uncomfortable. Everyone has to adjust."

Meadow Heights

Room 13

April 25, 1980

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Stickney,

Thank you for coming to our classroom. We really enjoyed your visit. We learned many things about dwarfs. Like the extensions on your ears, and how you sit tall, but stand short. We liked when Mrs. Stickney touched the floor with her head. We have [illegible] board about Little People [illegible] our classrooms. We would [illegible] have you come back some day [illegible]

Sincerely,

Your friends from room [illegible]

MEMO

From

Barbara E. Adams

4-30-80

Dear Mr. and Mrs Stickney;

I would like to add my thanks to that of the children. It was a really wonderful experience for them.

I can't tell you how much we enjoyed having you visit us.

Thank you so very much.

Sincerely

Barbara Adams

Meadow Heights

Room 13

April 25, 1980

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Stickney,

Thank you for coming to our classroom. We really enjoyed your visit. We learned many things about dwarfs. Like the extensions on your car, and how you sit tall, but stand short. We liked when Mrs. Stickney touched the floor with her head. We have a bulletin board about Little People in our classrooms. We would like to have you come back some day

Sincerely,

Your friends from room 1

John Palicki Ivanca Hull

Michael A. Minnick

Marc L Dotson

Leslie Ebb. Christopher Eggert

Gregory Romm

Dave Marasco Tai Williams

Chris shelton Jennifer Baker

Adrien Lanusse

Teresa Cheung Christine Kugler

Todd Armenio

Cinthia Huff Lisa Green

Dawn Bojicki

Andy Campbell Jaan Rett

Corey Cohen

Brian Bozick Amy Willams

Apel Geddes

Room 13
MEADOW HEIGHTS SCHOOL
2619 Dolores Ave.
San Mateo, Calif. 94403

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NOV 11 1979

Mr. and Mrs. Stickney
Box 633
San Bruno, CA. 94066

The Little people of America

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W

April

Little People of America

Mrs. and Mrs Stickney

1 - 3 -

2 - 4 -

Class recalls dwarf's visit

Barbara Adams' class was visited by two dwarfs. Here's how the kids reacted:

Some dwarfs came to our class. Their names were Mr. and Mrs. Stickney. They were nice. They talked about The Little People of America. It was fun.

They showed us their car. It had extensions connected to the pedals and the end of the extension had a piece of metal so they could reach it.

We compared Dr. Krumbein to the dwarfs. Dr. Krumbein is 6 feet 8 inches tall.

Michael Minnick
Meadow Heights School
Grade 3

Mr. and Mrs. Stickney are mutation dwarfs.

Brian Bozich
Meadow Heights School
Grade 3

This is my very first time to see a dwarf. They are very short. I should not be saying that because they are bigger than my friend and me. They have a motto, it is "Think Big."

They have little arms and legs, but the trunk of their body is big. Their names are Mr. and Mrs. Stickney. They are very nice.

Dena Bowen
Meadow Heights School
Grade 3

On April 15, some special people came to Room 13. They belong to a club, "Little People of America." These people are called dwarfs. Some of the kids said they were midgets, but really they were dwarfs.

You see, a dwarf has the same size body as an average sized person, but they have small arms and legs. A dwarf's whole body is small. Their names are Mr. and Mrs. Stickney. Their heights are four feet two, and four feet, six inches.

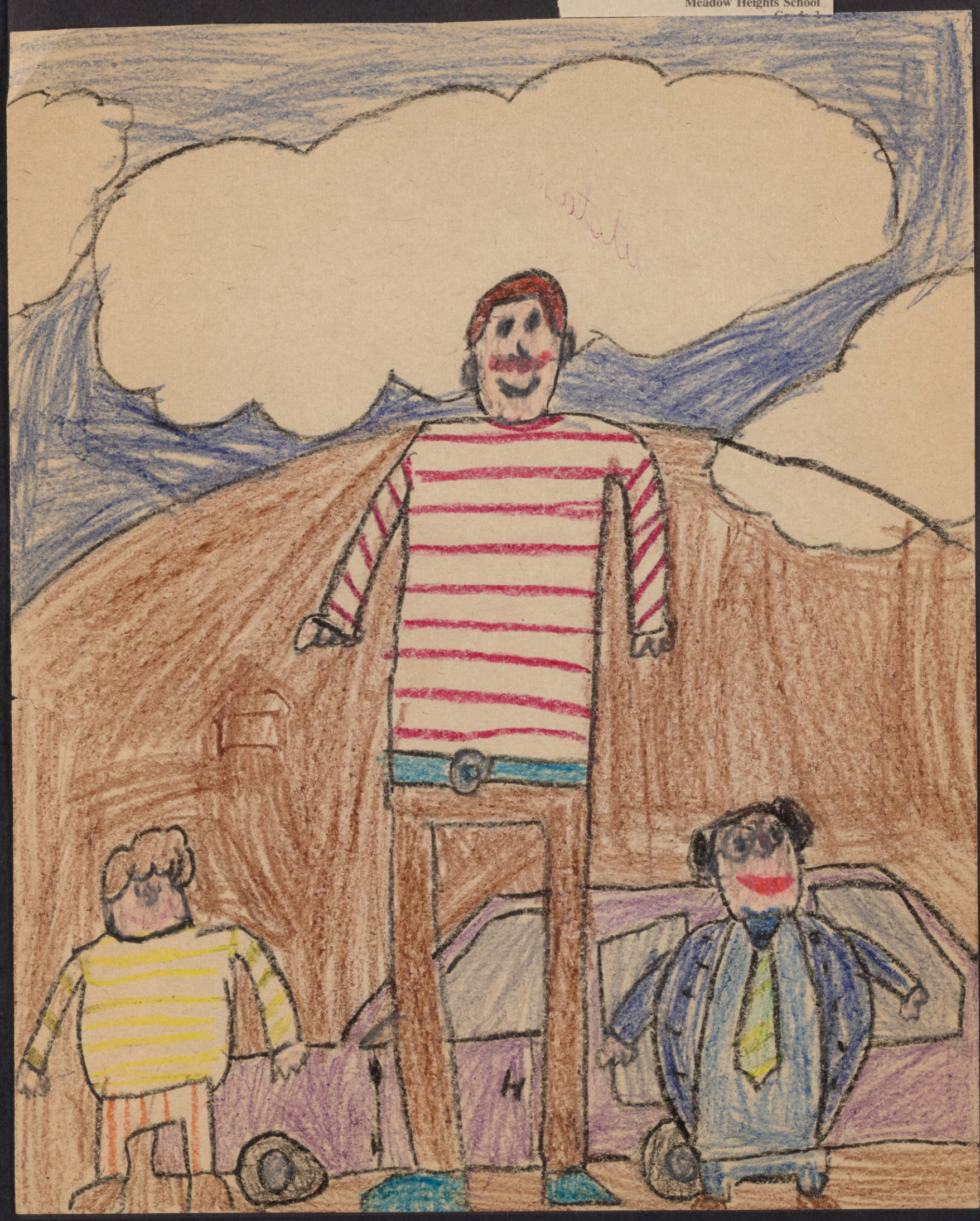
John Palicki
Meadow Heights School
Grade 3

Two dwarfs named Mr. and Mrs. Stickney came to Room 13 at Meadow Heights. Mr. Stickney's height is 4 feet 6 inches and Mrs. Stickney's height is 4 feet 2 inches.

I am taller than they are. They are not midgets, they are dwarfs. They have short legs and arms and a loud voice. Some dwarfs need extensions to drive. Their motto is "THINK BIG."

Some dwarfs have remodeled kitchens and the stoves are 30 inches off the ground. A few years ago it was hard for dwarfs to get a job but the e-z-est job for them to get is acting in movies, like in the "Wizzard of Oz" and the Munchkins.

Jean Rett
Meadow Heights School
Grade 3



Mr. and Mrs. Stickney are dwarfs. Dwarfs are regular people. Their legs are shorter than ours. But they are nothing to laugh at.

Some dwarfs have seeing-eye problems. Some dwarfs marry average size people. Mrs. Stickney taught school.

Dwarfs need extensions for their car. The extensions are used to extend the gas and brake pedals.

Some dwarfs need to sit on pillows for the car seat. Sometimes they have average size babies. Dwarfs don't walk till two years old.

Jennifer Wu
Meadow Heights School
Grade 3

Two little dwarfs visited us. Their names are Mr. and Mrs. Stickney. They have a club called Little People of America, They are a achondroplasia kind of dwarf. They have two long extensions. One pushes the gas pedal and one pushes the brake inside the car Mr. Stickney is 4'6". Mrs. Stickney is 4'2". Mrs. Stickney stood straight.

Without bending her knees, she put her head on the ground. It was neat We saw their car. It was the same kind of car you have, but the gas and brake pedals were raised.

Ted Williams
Meadow Heights School
Grade 3

Today Mr. and Mrs. Stickney came to our classroom. They told us that they are dis-proportionate. Also, they told us lots of other interesting things. One other thing they said is their height. Mr. Stickney is 4'6" and Mrs. Stickney is 4'2". Later we got to see their car and their dog.

Corey Cohen
Meadow Heights School
Grade 3

Mr. and Mrs Stickney are dwarfs. They are 4'2" and 4'6". They belong to the Little People of America. They are real nice people. They have special attachments for the gas pedal and the brakes. But they have a regular car. It's a Datsun 610 hatchback.

Mrs. Stickney was a teacher and Mr. Stickney works for United Airlines.

Todd Armenio
Meadow Heights School
Grade 3

In Room 13 we had a visit from a couple of dwarfs. Their names are Mr. and Mrs. Stickney. When they stand they stand short. Their feet don't touch the ground. Mr. Stickney works for United Airlines.

They had their kitchen remodeled so that they could reach the cupboards. They were nice. They were 4'2" and 4'6".

They have gas and brake extensions so they can reach the pedals. They bolt on the extensions to drive.

Topeka Kans- Capitol Journal- March 1980

asketball is a game of speed, height and endurance, but for 14-year-old Jason Rentfro it's

A matter of heart

The faces in the gymnasium are blurred. Thousands of feet stomp, thousands of voices chant: "Two! Two! Two!"

A glance at the scoreboard shows Auburn's eighth-grade basketball team behind, 99 - 98; the clock shows 14 seconds to play.

Auburn brings the ball in and the ball goes to Jason Rentfro. Rentfro puts a move on his man, drives toward the basket. Shoots.

The ball goes up BUZZZZZZZZ!

Swish.

The chant changes: "Jason! Jason! Jason!"

One voice stands out above the rest.

"Jason, you need to take care of your ducks."

The faces fade; the gymnasium walls again become the cold gray of the Rentfros' basement. The voices die in his ears.

"Sure, mom," Jason Rentfro says.

The ducks are part of the real world, a 4-H project. Rentfro's world also includes a 50-mph go-cart, a 10-year old sister and, sometimes, dishes.

"I did the dishes a few days ago," he said. "I'm always washer, and my sister always gets technical and throws them back." He grinned. "What I like to do is slip them in the dishwasher."

The world also includes imaginary basketball games.

In the imaginary games in the basement 14-year-old Jason Rentfro can make last-minute, game-winning shots; if he stands on a chair he can stuff the ball through the five-foot-high rim.

But imagination isn't enough. Rentfro lives life with zest, zest that at times comes out in puckish ways; that zest has propelled his four-foot frame into the middle of what many people consider a tall man's game.

So Rentfro is on the traveling squad of the Auburn Junior High School eighth-grade basketball team.

"I've played in five or so games this year," he said. "Tim Peterson's a good coach, although he doesn't like for us to call him Tim and Peterson's too long, so we call him Pete. If we're ahead or behind quite a bit, he likes to put us B-team members in.

"I wanted to go out for football this year, but I'm too short. My folks were afraid I'd get hurt," Rentfro said. "I went out for managing this year, which is OK. I like being with the guys."

Life isn't all football and basketball. Rentfro hunts, fishes, takes care of his menagerie and competes with sister Rhonda.

"During the winter we play cards a lot," he said. "Crazy eights, 21." Some Sundays the family goes to the Dover Christian Church. "Not always," he said. "Building that tin barn back there, that took a lot of Sundays."

Rentfro explores the countryside northwest of Auburn: "Fishin', froggin', that sort of thing."

In the spring, he hunts morels.

"I can't tell you where," he said. "Mom wouldn't want me to blab."

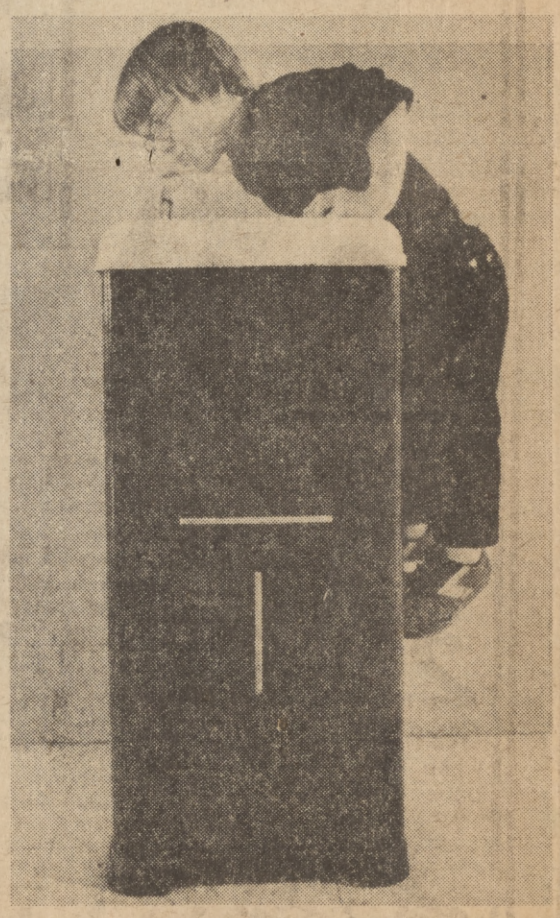
He told of a bass he had caught. The first telling was of a five-pound bass. Then he held his hands in front of him.

"That big," he said. "And I caught a catfish that big one time, too."

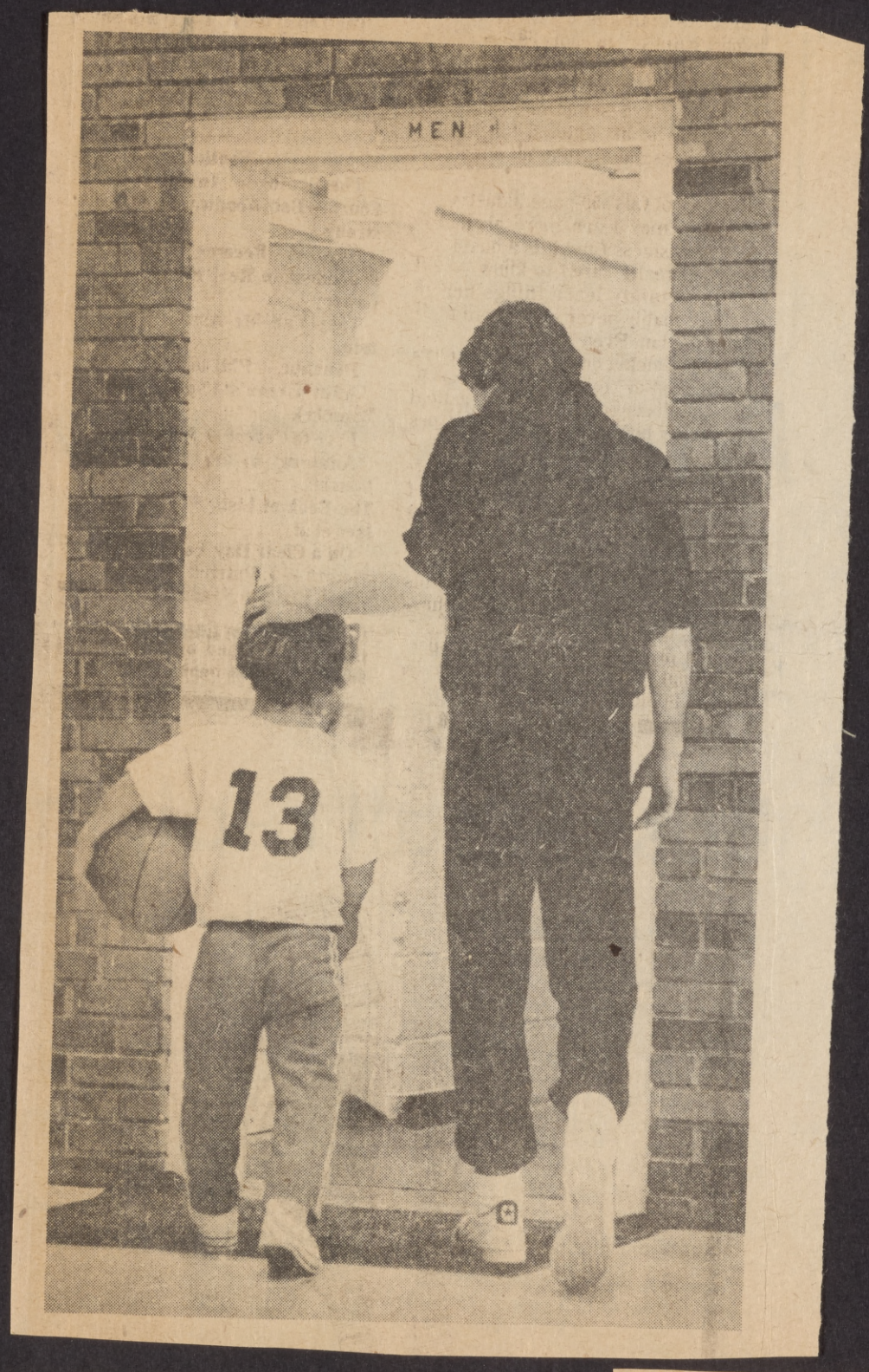
He cleans what he catches and his mother cooks it.

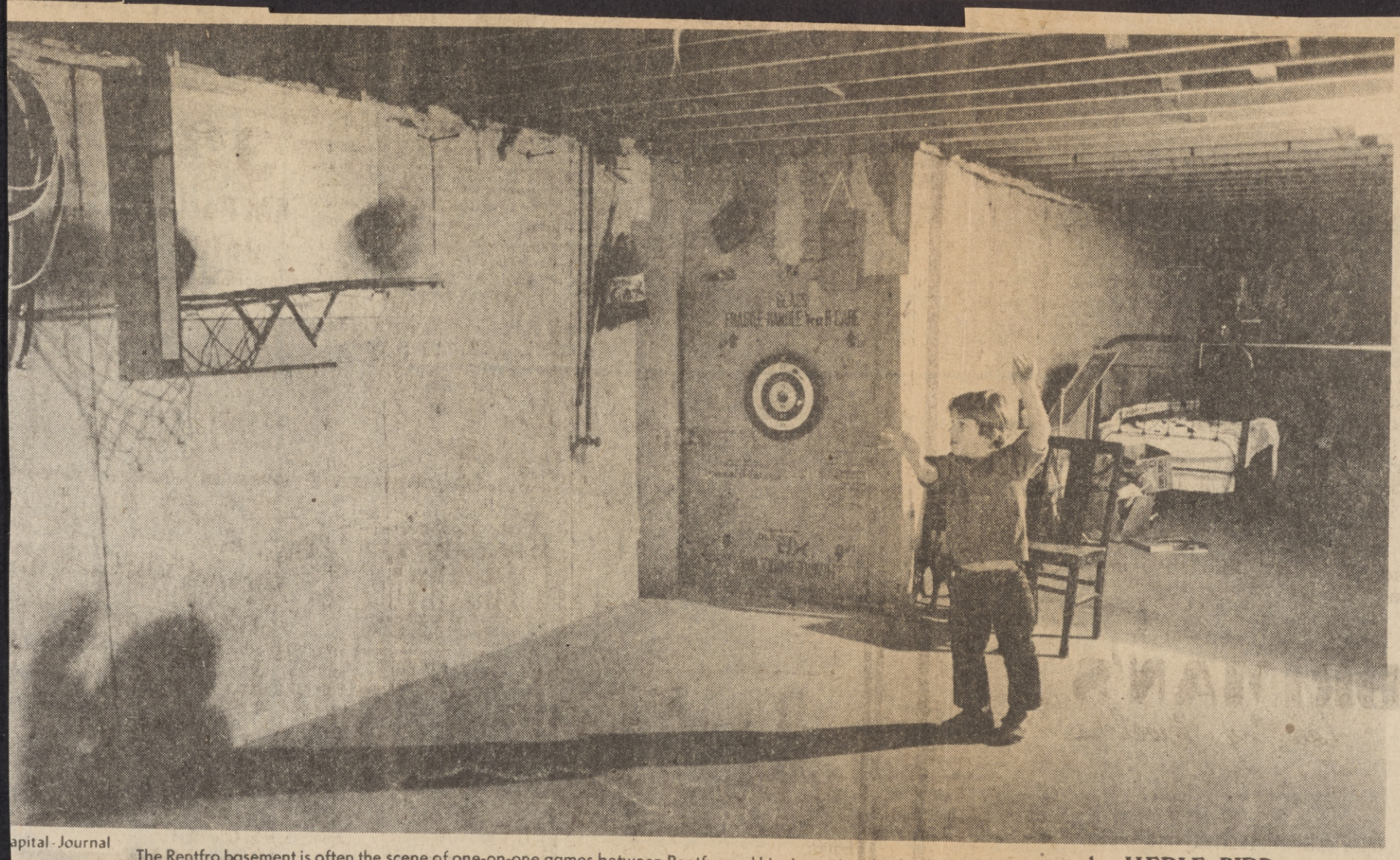
(Continued on Page 22, Col. 1.)

Rentfro plays heads-up, hands-up ball. He says the main thing is being one of the guys.



Rentfro mastered the drinking fountain before he joined the coach for a conference.





Best wishes from
Jason Rentfro

apital-Journal

the family

The Rentfro basement is often the scene of one-on-one games between Rentfro and his sister Rhonda, that let Rentfro improve hand-eye coordination. With the aid of a chair, he can fulfill his fantasy of "stuffing in" the game-winning basket.

by MERLE BIRD
photos by CHRIS JOHNS

—Dave Dornlas photo

Small talk

Al and Harriet Stickney will be the speakers when the Friends of San Bruno Library presents a "Little People of America" program Sept. 8 at 8 p.m. in the library's meeting room. The Stickneys are members of both organizations and will discuss the daily lives of "the small world of those born of short stature" and the average size world. The Stickneys show Hazel Cherioc, center, material concerning "Little People of America." A business meeting at 9:30 p.m. will preceed the discussion.

FRIENDS OF SAN BRUNO LIBRARY

cordially invite you to

A Visit with the Stickneys

AL and HARRIET

talk about

"The Little People of America,"

AN ORGANIZATION FOR DWARFS

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

8 p.m.

SAN BRUNO LIBRARY MEETING ROOM

Free Admission. Refreshments Served.

BOOK DONATIONS FOR THE OCTOBER SALE APPRECIATED

Friends Business Meeting at 7:30 p.m.

NEWS

12-9 Monday
10-6 Tuesday
10-9 Wed., Thurs.
10-6 Friday
10-5 Saturday

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Council during its
recent 1980/81 budget hearings. Her first day of work will be September 3, 1980. Celia's duties will include reference work, publicity and programming, and the young adult collection. She graduated from the University of California/Davis with a B.A. in history and she received her Masters Degree in Library Science from San Jose State University. She is a member of the California Native Plant Society and the National Audubon Society. She is also interested in all forms of modern dance and quilting.

We on the staff of the San Bruno Library welcome our two new staff members.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

On September 8th at 8:00 p.m. the Friends of the San Bruno Public Library will feature Harriet and Al Stickney, long-time patrons of the San Bruno Library, as speakers for the evening. Their talk will be on "Little People of America." Both Harriet and Al have been national officers of LPA. They actively promote better understanding of short-statured people through personal appearances on TV and radio talk-shows.

FOOTNOTES

SAN BRUNO PUBLIC LIBRARY

AUGUST 1980

701 Angus Avenue West
San Bruno, CA 94066
877-8878

12-9 Monday
10-6 Tuesday
10-9 Wed., Thurs.
10-6 Friday
10-5 Saturday

STAFF NEWS

Poebe Wise has joined the staff of the San Bruno Library as a Librarian I. She fills the vacancy created when Terry Jackson took over the Librarian II position held by the retiring Anne Ramberg.

Phoebe comes to San Bruno with experience as the head of the Cataloging Department, Penrose Memorial Library, Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. She has used the Washington Library network on-line cataloging subsystem at Penrose and instituted a program to automate old cataloging records. At San Bruno, Phoebe will be responsible for the library's cataloging activities and will also work as a reference librarian.

Celia LaRiviere will be the new part-time librarian to fill the professional position approved by the San Bruno City Council during its recent 1980/81 budget hearings. Her first day of work will be September 3, 1980. Celia's duties will include reference work, publicity and programming, and the young adult collection. She graduated from the University of California/Davis with a B.A. in history and she received her Masters Degree in Library Science from San Jose State University. She is a member of the California Native Plant Society and the National Audubon Society. She is also interested in all forms of modern dance and quilting.

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Patty Bell, Robert Bell, Cathy Hall, and Terry Dickson.

Jennie Lee, Harry (deceased) and Rosa Cohen, who gave us the costumes for our Movie Character night.

Jean D'Aqistino and Cathy Crispo from New York

Norma Pratt, Mina Mittleman Short, Ruth Spiering

Frank Law, Kevin Mc Gowan, Debbie Carrington, Tony Cox, and Kendra Wall

Terry Dickson, Margo Apostolos, and Vickie Napoli

Homecoming Queen 1980

Pictured above is Homecoming Queen Judi Weaver and her escort Guy Eubank. The Princesses attending Judi were as follows; (Seniors) Laura Kirn, Heather McCully and Angel Martella; (Junior) Tina Anderson escorted by David Fiester; (Sophomore), Kim Halbakken escorted by Mike Wong; (Freshman) Diane Essex her escort Craig VanPaul.

Deaths

10-22-80
S Bruno-Herald

MARY M. ANDERSON

Mary Mannette Anderson, 88, of San Bruno, died Sunday in Millbrae.

She was a native of Wisconsin, had resided in this area for many years and was a charter member of Little People of America.

Survivors include a sister, Etta Fredell of Seattle, Wash.

Funeral services will be at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday at the San Bruno Funeral Home in San Bruno, with private entombment at Sunset Mausoleum in Berkeley.

November 21, 1980
1481 S. Fish Hatchery Road
Oregon, Wisconsin 53575

Little People of America
Box 126
Owatonna, Minn. 55060

To whom it may concern;

I am an 18 year old dwarf and I am a senior at Oregon Senior High School. The reason why I am writing is I was wondering if you could send me some information on dwarves. I have done some research and haven't really found much that is helpful.

I hear that in your area there is a club where all the dwarves meet. Also I would like to know about that. If that's possible. Another thing I was wondering is if there is someone in my area I could contact?

I would appreciate any information that you could send me. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Brenda Judd

DECEMBER - 1980

The youngsters at church are preparing Christmas carols, one pink camellia is in bud, red trumpeting fushia still waft in the breeze, in the back patio red and white impatiens bloom on and on, and so the joy and wonder of the season slowly creep upon these two transplanted Californians.

Actually, the months of 1980 have slowly crept away too. It's been a busy and good year. In April, Al completed twenty-five years with United Air Lines. Both of us joined a number of other clebrants and spouses on a S.F. Bay cruise as guests of the company. Then the clebrants, alone, attended a banquet where they received honors. Due to the economic situation, there's been quite a bit of re-grouping. Al continues to be a maintenance planner, but has back on swing (3PM to 11PM) since August. He will be on swing until next June. He continues to have rotating days off..

About every six weeks we continue to head north to our place at Fort Bragg, Ca. Now have an electric saw and have had fun and exercise doing some needed pruning, as well as building up our firewood supply. Over the 4th of July weekend, we were able to attend the annual salmon barbeque..OH YUMMY MEMORIES. Also were able to attend the annual production of the Footlight Theater group. Each year they present an original comedy in the Gay Nineties theme. Completely a volunteer local group, they do a super job providing the audience with many good laughs.

Summer also means National LPA Convention. Since it was in Los Angeles, part of our district, we were quite involved chairmaning a few committees. It was another record breaker, over 600 in attendance. Houseguests came back with us. There were a number of others who came on to visit in the area. Get-togethers were arranged, and the spirit of convention kept on for another week plus.

The local LP Parent and Childrens' group continues to thrive. We continue to co-ordinate those activities. We've had an average of one new family a month contacting us! At one of the summer functions we had eleven dwarfed youngsters under the age of eight. Our first group (from 1968) are now teens or young adults..They now are doing things as groups...Along with us they are looking forward to local and district events, and the 1981 LPA convention, July 20-24 in St. Paul. We'll go and then visit H's family in the midwest.

Speaking to schools; elementary, high, and college continues to be a worthwhile experience. At grade schools even MOPS gets in the act, when the youngsters come out to see the car extensions. She is usually with us. Continue to speak to service groups too. We enjoy doing it and the person to person contact helps.

Two weeks of fall vacation were spent visiting the families in the midwest and New England. So good to see everyone. Oohed and ahed over the two great-nephews and one great niece born since the last time we were in Wis. Course we renewed our relationships with the other five "greats." Even got to baby sit Betty and David's three one night. (David, one of H's six nephews).

Exclaimed over the beginning of fall color in New England. The Renos were still at Lake Sunapee, and the Tarr cousins were at the camp where Al spent so many great summers as a boy..The last few days of vacation were spent on our own exploring Cape Cod. The C.C. National Seashore is breathtakingly lovely. Course we devoured east coast fresh seafood whenever possible.

Hope 1980 has been a rewarding one for you and yours. May the PEACE and JOY of this season abide with you all through 1981..

LITTLE PEOPLE of AMERICA, Inc.

Founder - BILLY BARTY

Through some of your District Newsletters and individual correspondence, I have received notice of appointments of Parent Auxiliary Delegates, Young Adult Representatives, and District Reporters; but with many I have not. Please drop me a line as to your appointments for my records, and future publications.

Lee Kitchens has informed me that the Texas Instruments memory disk device has been sent to Billy Hare. In time, our membership data will be ready for processing, and we'll have our own in-house computer system. The computer was displayed for the first time at the LA convention. More on this in up-comming letters.

Received word that PM Magazine television series will be doing a feature on Doctor Steven Kopits on December 9th, or thereabouts. A few of the stations will be showing the documentation with our members assisting in the presentation.

If your area has articles appearing in the paper, please have your reporter send the original or copies to our historian, Carol Kelly, 915 Caroline Ave, North Augusta, S.C. 29841.

May I extend a season's greetings for a joyous Christmas, and a happy Honukkah. LPA is comming upon a new year. You can bet it's going to be an exciting one.

Cordially,

Bobby Van Etten

Bobby Van Etten
LPA National President

Family had a dozen reasons to take trip

By Lois Blinkhorn

of The Journal Staff

It must have looked like a scene straight out of "Cheaper by the Dozen."

Barney and Bev Karpfinger, their eight children (aged 12 to 26) and Barney's mother and father (81 and 86) piled into a neighbor's van, trundled down to Chicago's O'Hare airport and climbed aboard a trans-Atlantic flight for Frankfort, Germany.

If you've ever been on a family vacation, even the idea of this trip could be enough to make you reach for the aspirin bottle. Just imagine keeping track of 12 passports and 12 suitcases, not to mention purses and hairdryers and laundry and which socks belong to whom. And who's teasing whom. And who started it.

But ask Bev Karpfinger about the trip and she smiles her serene smile and says, "It certainly was much easier than all of our other trips. This time, everybody was almost an adult."

Not everyone took the Karpfinger entourage so serenely, though.

"We kind of overwhelmed the airline people," said Joe, who is 23.

Bev added, "At customs they just rolled their eyes and waved their hands and said, 'Go on through.' "

—Journal Photo

This is just half of the dozen Karpfingers who went to Europe last summer. Clockwise from lower left are Peg, Beth, Bev, Barney, Joe and Monica.

People amazed

The Germans and Austrians they met were amazed by this king-sized family.

"The size of our family is gigantic to them. By their standards, two is a big family," Bev said.

But we're getting ahead of the story.

This family adventure started out as a simple trip for two. And its destination was not Germany and Austria, but the Soviet Union.

It all began on Oct. 12, 1979, when Marquette University wrestlers, past and present, gave a testimonial dinner for Barney. He had been Marquette's wrestling coach for 23 years, and to honor him the wrestlers gave him a dinner and a gift — a trip for two to the Olympics.

It was a fantastic send-off for Barney, who also operates his own landscaping and excavating firm called Edgerton Contractors, Inc. He was looking forward to seeing Wisconsin's Russ Hellickson win a gold medal in wrestling in Moscow.

That, of course, was before the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. As it turned out, the United States withdrew from the summer Olympics to protest the Soviet move.

Changed plans

When that happened, the Karpfingers decided to change their plans.

"I had no interest in going to the Olympics if the United States wasn't participating," said Barney. "It's hard to understand how disappointing it was. A whole lot of people lost a lot of years of training."

So Bev started thinking. She was orphaned before she was 5, and family is terribly important to her. Barney's parents had come from Austria as young adults, so there were relatives galore in Europe. Wouldn't it be great to take all the children and Barney's parents to Austria?

At first, Barney wasn't too enthusiastic about the idea. His parents had visited their homeland several times, but he had never had the urge. But Bev kept talking and the kids were enthusiastic, so finally he decided to go along with it.

For the record, here's the rundown on the Karpfinger children: Barney, 26, is a literary agent in New York City; Chuck, 25, is in the process of setting up a travel service in Milwaukee; Joe, 23, works for a Milwaukee bank; Maria, 21, is studying at the University of London; Sue, 19, graduated from high school last spring and works in Milwaukee; Peg, 17, and Beth, 15, are students at Greenfield High School; Monica, 12, is in sixth grade at Alverno College Elementary School. The four youngest live at home in the big, roomy Karpfinger house in Greenfield.

After their arrival in Frankfort, the family rented a van and drove to Vienna. They visited one set of relatives there, then drove out to a country village nearby to see the other branch of the family. They split up during most of the trip, two or three staying at each relative's home. All of them speak a little German, so they were able to get along without too much difficulty. Joe, who had visited Vienna on his own, and his father had the best command of the language.

Joe, Beth, Peg and Monica and their parents shared memories of the experience:

"The drive from Frankfort to Vienna along the Danube was really beautiful," said Joe. "And the people have such a sense of culture and history."

Austrian food drew raves.

"Oh, we ate huge meals," said Beth. "I gained 10 pounds."

Monica added, "Everytime we went to visit, they would bring out a big meal."

Barney was impressed when a relative showed him the Czech border

Turn to Page 9

Traveling by the dozen

From Page 8

where just two weeks earlier some people had been caught trying to cross over into Austria.

"As we looked at the river, my cousin said, 'This is the end of the world,' " Barney said.

Bev said, "One thing that really hit me was how much the war had affected their lives. And I was impressed by how wasteful we are in this country."

Barney hasn't regretted his decision to make the trip, even though it meant a considerable outlay of money (in addition to the testimonial money) to get the whole family to Europe and back.

"For me the high point was meeting all of those people. I didn't think I would enjoy it, but they were so hospitable and enjoyable. To meet the uncles and aunts and cousins was something. It was a moving experience when my dad showed me where he grew up," said Barney.

Bev remembers most vividly the visit to the village church:

"We went to the church that Barney's father had been baptized in. All the kids met us there for mass. To meet the other members of the Karpfinger family and to worship there, to look at the pew ahead of me and see Maria Karpfinger's (Barney's grandmother) name on it, to walk down the alley to a Karpfinger's home for breakfast. That was just a real rich experience."

This was the first time Barney, Bev and all their children had been together in eight years. Said Bev with a smile and a shake of her head:

"I don't see how the Olympics could have been any better than that."

FILM

Carrie Fisher in 'Under the Rainbow'

Article appeared in SF. Chronicle 12/13/80

She's Looking After 150 Midgets

By Roderick Mann

Hollywood

FOR THE FIRST time in her career, Carrie Fisher is feeling tall. For this 5-foot-1½-inch actress, making a comedy thriller for Orion release here — "Under the Rainbow" — is playing the part of a young woman whose job it is to look after 150 midgets. And some of them are as small as 2 feet 2 inches.

"Actually, I almost didn't get the film," she said over lunch the other day, "because they were worried I wasn't that much taller than the little people. But with high heels on I can get away with it. I must say it makes a change. Remember, I've spent most of my film career looking at people's chests."

When she finishes the film, in which she stars with Chevy Chase, she takes off almost straight away for her home in New York. "I can never wait to get back to New York and get mugged," she said.

There won't be much time for that because soon after getting home she takes off for London to re-create her role as Princess Leia in the third of the Star Wars trilogy — "The Revenge of the Jedi."

The series has already proved to be a small gold mine for her — though not as bottomless as reported, she insists. This may continue, for there could well be other films after "The Revenge of the Jedi."

"Everyone thinks I made a fortune out of 'Star Wars,'" she said. "That's because Time magazine said so. On the strength of their story, I went out and spent a lot of money I hadn't got. I had net points, you see, not gross ones. There's a lot of difference."

Even so, it is clear that from the three films she will have made enough money to stay clear of the bread line for a long time to come.

"Having been in two big successes, people assume that I must have had lots of offers from other producers. I haven't. In fact, I got more offers after I made 'Shampoo' (in which, as the teen-age nymphet intent on seducing Warren Beatty, she uttered the ultimate four-letter word).

"I suppose it's because Princess Leia is such an odd type. A sort of Snow White character. And as I recall Snow White didn't get much work after that first film. Though she did get her prince. Look what happened to me. My boyfriend was frozen. (In "The Empire Strikes Back," Harrison Carroll was turned into a block by Darth Vader's bounty hunters.)

"Watching me in those films would give you no idea what I really look like. So it's not surprising that producers wanting a modern-day girl wouldn't think of me. But I wish they would."

At the moment, her father Eddie Fisher is staying at her New York apartment. Did she have any news about his long-awaited autobiography?

"No," she said. "But before I left to come here I saw the manuscript beside his bed. Personally, I hope he doesn't publish it. I don't approve of people writing their life stories, particularly people I know.

"I hated 'Mommie Dearest.' I thought it was awful. It almost convinced me I should sit down and write one myself — 'Fishwire' (a dig at "Haywire"). I could relate how bitter and scarred I am from my tragic childhood; how my mother Debbie Reynolds was never home, and neglected me." Suddenly she brightened. "Listen, maybe that's not such a bad idea . . ."

Los Angeles Times

Mrs. Mike Wells and daughter Mindy admire tiny new furniture. AP

Club assists afflicted child

SALINAS (AP) — Mindy Wells, 5, who is 31 inches tall and weighs 15 pounds, has a room scaled to her own size, thanks to the Salinas Lions Club.

The club has taken out a mortgage on the house and will pay it off so that Mindy's mother, Mrs. Mike Wells, will have time to care for the child. A number of Salinas residents helped make the tiny furniture.

Mindy suffers from a rare form of dwarfism. Doctors say she will always be tiny.

Dealing with the pressures of being little

81

Beth Anderson walks her pony yesterday in Pembroke.

GLOBE PHOTO BY STAN GROSSFELD

By Katherine Pappas
Globe Correspondent

They prefer to call themselves little people. But to most people they are known as dwarfs and midgets. For them, even the smallest tasks average-sized people take for granted, can be infuriatingly difficult.

They are faced with everyday minor annoyances such as finding clothes that fit or reaching elevator buttons or telephones.

Yet for many, there are more disturbing inner conflicts, such as dealing with constant stares and the anxiety of dating and socializing.

Many little people, however, have dealt remarkably well with their condition and are able to function normally in what they call a "big people's world."

Little People of America Inc. (LPA) has approximately 4000 members throughout the United States who are 4 feet 10 or less, and was formed in 1957 to provide a network of little people and their families to discuss medical, social and job-related issues faced by a little person.

As Ruth E. Ricker put it at a monthly meeting yesterday of New England LPA members in Pembroke, "We're basically a social organization designed so we can meet others like ourselves, and to basically have fun."

Ricker, 21, director of the New England chapter of LPA and a sophomore at Northeastern University, said: "Many little people don't want to socialize with other little people because they don't want to admit to themselves that they are different from others in our physical stature," she said.

Yesterday about 12 little people and their families gathered at a secluded cottage near a pond and cranberry bog in Pembroke. A potluck bar-b-que, coupled with lots of milling around and socializing, gave the gathering the atmosphere of a family reunion. The owners of the cottage have a daughter who is a small person.

Ricker said there are 54 little people in the New England chapter. Its total membership of 121 includes family members.

There are an estimated 130,000 dwarfs and midgets in the United States.

According to Ricker, the most common form of dwarfism is achondroplasia, which is a genetic bone disorder that causes disproportionate dwarfism. It is a rare condition, occurring in about one birth in 10,000.

The other major type of dwarfism is caused by dysfunction of the pituitary gland.

The causes of dwarfism are not known and research has not produced a cure yet. Pituitary hormones may be given to midgets to control the condition.

Al Staples of Somerville, whose wife, Celeste, was also at the gathering, commented: "Society thinks of us as being handicapped, but to us we're just normal people who happen to be small."

Although Ricker said she has encountered some problems at Northeastern, she said that for the most part, students have been understanding.

Beth Anderson, a sophomore at Whitman-Hanson High School, and one of the younger members of the group, said that it was often difficult dealing with the reactions of people.

"I just changed schools recently and at my old school, people used to tease me and stared all the time, but at the school I go to now, no one even pays attention to me, I guess maybe they're more mature or something."

"Finding clothes that fit is a big problem," Celeste Staples said. "Most of the time I get my mother to make them for me because it's so difficult to find something, and when you do, you have to cut off a foot or so."

"She can't even reach the racks half the time," her husband joked.

"But seriously," Al said. "This is the International Year of the Handicapped, and we want to open people's eyes, and let them know that despite our problems, we're just normal people."

81

Smallest man in world eyes retirement

WETUMPKA, Ala. (UPI) — Pete Moore, 27 inches tall and billed as the "world's smallest man," says he's through with carnivals and has settled down to lead a normal family life.

Born 48 years ago with a bone disease that made him a dwarf, Moore traveled the United States for 23 years appearing in carnival freak shows, and he already has lived eight years beyond his life expectancy.

Moore made enough money on the road to buy a small house north of Montgomery where he settled down with his wife, Adena, who is 5-feet-9. They have two children, Johnny, 11, and Carol, 9.

Moore drives a car, mows the grass and does odd jobs around the house. But doctors have warned him to slow down, and he is looking to invest in a small business.

"The doctor has told me I won't be able to do what I'm doing until I'm 65, so we're trying to establish another business and give us another income so we can get by," he said.

"I'm going to get out of the carnival business. The escalating expenses, the hours and the agitation are affecting my health. I'm getting up to 50 years old. I still feel like I have a lot of years left, but my doctor told me I was going to have to slow it down.

"The life span of a dwarf is not but about 40 years. I'm one of the lucky ones."

The second of nine children, Moore was born with osteogenesis imperfecta, an inherited disease that retards bone development and makes the bones brittle. The disease is one of two medical conditions that can cause a person to become a dwarf. The other is not hereditary.

The Moores' first child was normal, leading the couple to believe his condition was not hereditary. But the second child, Carol, was born with osteogenesis imperfecta. She is now 9 years old and is about 3 feet tall.

The New Zealand Herald

SECTION 2 Women, Racing, Business News, Classified Advertising.

Auckland, Tuesday, February 10, 1981 ★

Honest Reaction Beats Being Ignored Says 'Little Person' Lawyer

Angela Muir usually gets one of two standard responses from the people she meets—they stare or they ignore her.

When Angela Muir went job-hunting five years ago she had to be selective.

"I have trouble with stairs, so I had to find a place with good access," she says.

Not one to push her luck, she rang every legal firm in the telephone book — up to the Ts — to get a job.

Incidental

"In the end I was lucky," she says in her Otahuhu office. "Only 50 per cent of my class got jobs immediately."

Sometimes clients "look around for the lawyer" when they come to see her.

"But I just go straight into the interview and they can see that my size is incidental."

With a conspiratorial giggle, she recalls a duty solicitor stint two years ago when South Auckland gang members offered her a bodyguard.

"They were really good to me," she says. "When I turned up it sort of dissipated their anger."

Angela Muir counts a stable background as a "plus" for disabled people.

"I had the same peer-group in Papakura from primary school to high school," she says, "so everybody knew me."

Meeting a little person can touch nerve strings that make people jeer, gawk or even baby-talk. And parents' hang-ups can be readily transmitted to their children.

"Children usually recognise that I'm not like other adults and they will react openly to me. It makes me a bit angry that adults can't do the same.

"A disabled woman told me the other week that she had stopped going out because of all the gawking.

"But at least if they look at me, they have a chance to like me," says the 108cm (3ft 6in) lawyer.

Angela Muir, at 27, is president of the Little People of New Zealand Association and legislation convener for Auckland's International Year of Disabled Persons committee.

She carries out the normal duties of a barrister and solicitor, drives an automatic car and is writing a book called "A Bum's Eye View."

"It's autobiographical, but it's not about me," she says. "I think people should know how I feel when they stare at me or when they ignore me."

But it is not the bitterness of an odd-person-out that Angela Muir wants to lay down on paper.

Her goal is to increase public awareness of the one in 10 disabled people who make up the New Zealand population.

More Cash

A $5000 Winston Churchill fellowship will take her to the United States in March for three months' study of the work on the disabled and public education programmes there.

"Since the return of disabled Vietnam War veterans, there has been quite an increase in American Government funds for disabled work," she says.

"Public education," as they call it in America, is an important key to the successful integration of disabled people in society.

"Acceptance comes from people knowing you," Angela Muir says.

But a vicious circle arises when poor access and mobility keep disabled people out of sight — and out of mind — of the public they want to know.

Fire Risk

"Poor access can make it impossible for a disabled person to get inside a building for a job interview — let alone get a job."

For some employers, a disabled person can be a fire risk.

"Fire regulations can mean a person is refused a job if they can't get down the stairs in an emergency."

For Angela Muir, a bright, attractive woman, the social scene is probably the most difficult to fathom: "You just don't have the same opportunities as other girls," she says.

"It's a fact you've got to face that you can have lots of friends but when you go to a dance you are usually left without a partner.

"If someone wants to marry a disabled person, they have to be free of hang-ups. They certainly shouldn't be after a 'showcase' wife."

Being "on show" and keeping up face is a problem Angela Muir has only recently recognised.

"I feel so much we are on show and we have to be on our best behaviour. I have often suppressed my anger or resentment at people to keep up face.

Taken Aback

"But disabled people don't have a greater understanding or tolerance than other people."

She says she prefers people to be open when they meet her.

"If a person is taken aback, I don't mind, because it's probably an honest reaction. People learn to cope with their disabilities. After all, everybody's limited in some things."

Reasons

"There can also be a sort of elevated discrimination shown by patronising attitudes and pampering. My disability is not something terrible. It is something that happened. The negative aspects arise because people won't accept you as you are."

Angela Muir, like most little people, is an achondroplastic, with a larger head and smaller limbs than normal.

Fact to Face

"But there are 100 different reasons why people do not grow," she says, "including bone abnormalities and mutations."

Mainly Women

Angela Muir . . . working to gain understanding for little people.

World Not Built For Little People

DALLAS (AP) — When sheep buyer Clay Kitchens and his wife took their 16-month-old son to Minnesota's Mayo Clinic in 1932, they expected doctors to repair the boy's cleft palate. They were not expecting a new diagnosis: young Lee was a dwarf.

"Take him home and treat him like you would any other child;" doctors advised the Fort Worth couple.

"That's the best advice you could give anybody, for anybody who is handicapped," Kitchens, now 50, said. "Don't assume he can't do something until he's tried it several times."

Kitchens, engineering manager for Texas Instruments' home computer division at Lubbock, is 4-foot-1. He climbed into a chair in a motel room to talk about how he and other little people have learned to cope in a world built for bigger people.

Kitchens served as president of Little People of America from 1964 to 1968. His wife, Mary, who is 3-foot-11, was LPA treasurer from 1970 to 1974. But there was no Little People of America when he was a child, Kitchens said.

"My mother said she would have given her right arm to have had something like that when I was growing up, to help her," he said.

The world of little people is made up of dwarfs, who have normal chests and trunks, but short legs and feet, and midgets, who are small, but physically well-proportioned.

"The medical profession says any person under 5 feet is technically a dwarf, but most little people will top out at 4½ feet," Kitchens said. "We've got some that are quite a bit smaller than that. There are some who are only about 33 inches tall, and the smallest, I believe, is 29 inches."

Most little people are sensitive about the terms used to describe them.

"There are certain terms that blacks don't want to be called. And you don't refer to people with hearing impairments any more as deaf and dumb," Kitchens said. "So . . . little people. That's just what we are."

Kitchens also cited "artificial barriers' that still exist in American society, such as school regulations requiring all children to attain certain standards of sports prowess.

"There are some states, Louisiana for example, that have height requirements for teachers," he added, noting that Louisiana has lost many teachers of short stature to Texas, which has no such rule.

He and his wife met on a blind date while he was an electrical engineering student at Southern Methodist University and she an art student at Texas Woman's University. Last summer they celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary.

Many little people marry, and have children.

"Whether their children will also be little depends," Kitchens said. "Some are short by heredity and some are not. The first time it happens, it's genetic, and it can be hereditary after that. The chances can be anywhere from nil to 100 percent that they'll be little."

Little people sometimes adopt small children who are diagnosed as dwarfs or midgets. Kitchens and his wife did this.

"Sometimes a handicap at birth is more than parents can handle, and the children are put up for adoption. In the past, they were considered unadoptable and were made wards of the state. Now, officials have come to realize that these children can grow up in an environment where the parents understand what they're going to go through," Kitchens said.

The Kitchenses' children are Sandy, 21, and Alan, 25. Sandy is 4-foot-2, an inch taller than her father and three inches taller than her mother. But Alan was a surprise. He kept growing and is now 5-foot-7.

Little People of America had 400 members when Kitchens was president but has grown as it has gained exposure, he said. LPA now has 3,500 members.

The annual convention attracted 640 little people last year in Los Angeles. The next convention is scheduled for St. Paul, Minn., this July.

"At the first, when we had national conventions, the main attraction was a dance. It was quite a lift to walk up to somebody smaller than you and ask them for a dance," Kitchens said with a laugh.

"But we've graduated beyond just dances now. We have a lot of workshops where little people can find out how to handle some of the problems they come up against in a world made for big people."

CONCORD MONITOR, Thursday, February 26, 1981 — 28

AP

Kitchens says little people have learned to cope.

Page A14 The Sacramento Bee — Friday, February 6, 1981

Reaganite Gets Short Shrift In Job Freeze

By Bud Newman
Cox News Service

WASHINGTON — At 3-feet, 3-inches tall, Bobby Van Etten is a small person with a big battle on his hands: the president of the Little People of America is taking on the president of the United States.

Like hundreds of others who were hired for federal jobs after Nov. 4, Van Etten — a Republican who voted for Reagan — moved to Washington only to find himself umemployed, the victim of President Reagan's federal hiring freeze.

As promised during his campaign, Reagan's first act after taking office Jan. 20 was to freeze all federal hiring. But there was a kicker that has made life miserable for Van Etten and hundreds of others in the same position: Reagan made the freeze retroactive to election day, Nov. 4.

Now Van Etten, 31, is battling the bureaucracy for a special hardship exemption allowing him to keep the $32,000-a-year electrical engineer's job at the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board. The board notified him in writing Dec. 31 that he had been hired and he accepted immediately, he said.

The hardship exemption Van Etten seeks has nothing to do with the fact that he's short and partially disabled. It has to do with money.

Based on the letter confirming his employment, Van Etten borrowed nearly $3,000 to move from Orlando, Fla., to Washington. He sold many of his possessions in Florida and, when he got to Washington Jan. 20 — Inauguration Day — he quickly found an apartment and signed a one-year lease.

AP photo

Van Etten: jobless in Washington.

Then he went into the office Jan. 26 to start work, setting mimimum federal requirements for devices that help deaf and blind people overcome communication barriers. But before he could even begin, the job was over.

Van Etten said he supports the hiring freeze idea but feels it should not have been retroactive all the way back to November without some early announcement by Reagan of his intentions.

Van Etten was elected last year as president of the 3,000-member Little People of America Inc., "an organization of, by and for individuals of short stature that through fellowship finds solution to the unique challenges of little people."

Short Stature
Sensitivity Seminar

Sunday, November 22 at 1:00
in Stouffer College House

Become aware of and understand the unique problems and situations facing little people.

All invited

For further info call 243-6827

LITTLE PEOPLE of USA

On Sunday, November 22 1 PM in D-lounge Stouffer will be hosting a Short Stature Sensitivity Seminar sponsored by Little People of America (LPA). LPA is a nationwide organization that provides fellowship, moral support and an interchange of ideas and solutions to the problems unique to a little person. LPA also raises and disburses funds for medical research in the causes and possible treatment of dwarfism. The organization was founded in 1957 by Billy Barty, a famous TV and movie actor, and today it has a membership of close to 3000 people. Every July the LPA National Convention attracts between 500 and 600 members. In addition, the first annual international Little People Convention has been scheduled this April in Washington DC

The purpose of Sunday's seminar is to make people aware of and understand the problems that little people must face. The seminar is open to anyone and I urge all to attend. what will be a very informative and interesting afternoon. LPA members, including infants, teens, adults from different occupational backgrounds and parents of little people will be attending. Many University administrators and faculty members will be participating as well. Furthermore, elementary and secondary school teachers from the Delaware Valley have been invited. I ask every person attending to be open and feel free to ask questions. I don't want anyone to feel inhibited by my presence or to think that their questions might be insulting or offensive.

If people would like to make or bake food or assist in other ways, I could use the help. You can find me room 148D.

-Paul Miller

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA
PHILADELPHIA 19104

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

100 COLLEGE HALL CO
(215) 243-7221

November 21, 1981

Dear Friends:

Although I cannot be with you this afternoon to participate in the "Short Stature Sensitivity Seminar" at Stouffer House, I wish to extend my best wishes to the participants and the Little People of America (LPA) membership who have sponsored this event.

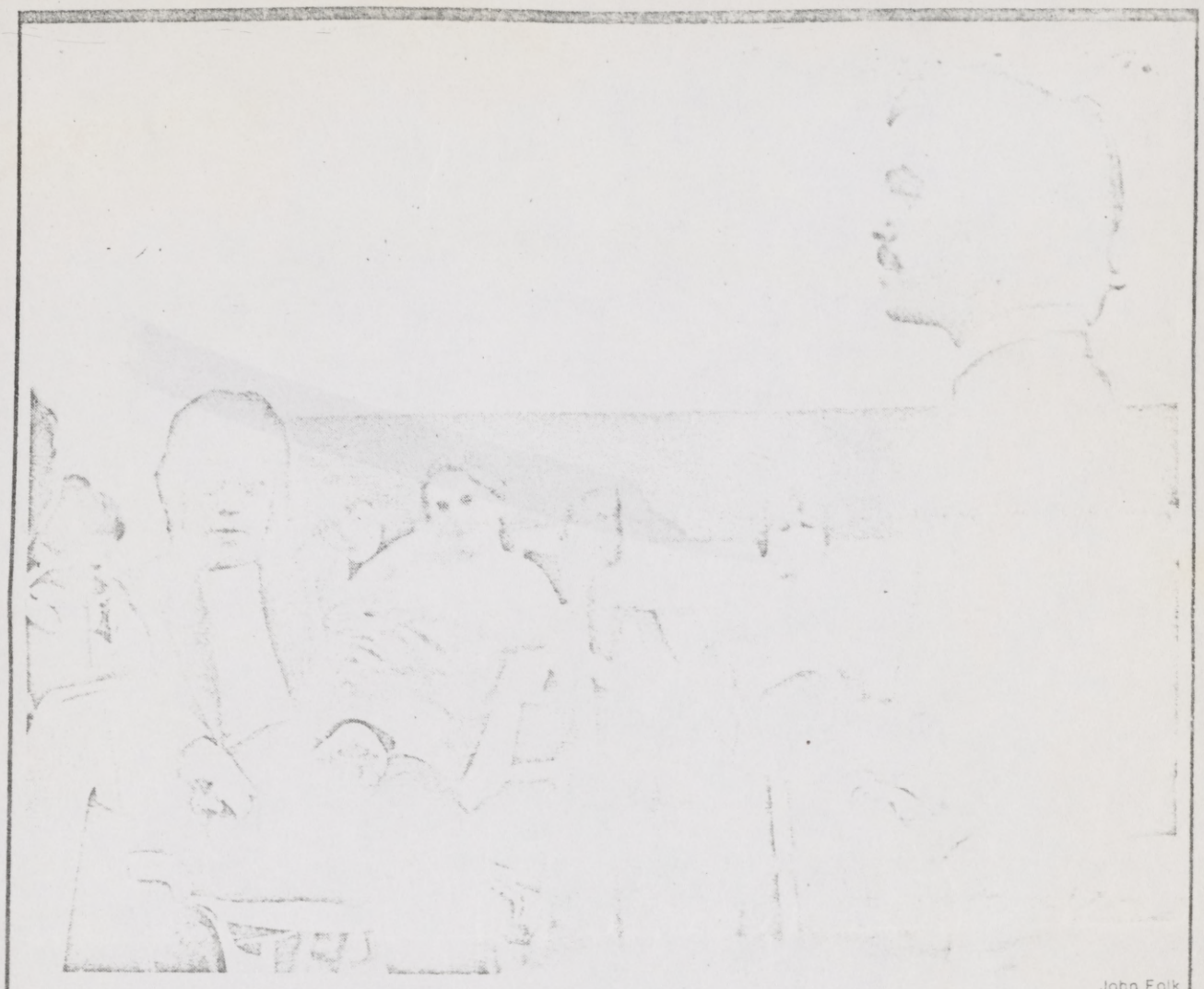
LPA has played a vital role in providing fellowship, moral support, and research funding and has served as a vehicle for exchange on the problems unique to a little person. I am delighted that the University of Pennsylvania is playing a part in this mission and I hope that we all can continue to gain insight from activities like this, and so acquire a better understanding of ourselves and our fellow citizens.

I would especially like you to join me in applauding Paul Miller for his efforts in pulling everything together for this seminar.

Cordially,

Sheldon Hackney

Sheldon Hackney



John Folk

College junior Paul Miller addressing the Little People of America forum

Forum Probes Problems Of 'Little People'

By AMES ALEXANDER

Some 60 people who attended a Short Stature Sensitivity Seminar on campus yesterday learned about the medical, social and emotional implications of dwarfism.

The conference, coordinated by College junior Paul Miller, was sponsored by Little People of America, a nationwide voluntary organization which, according to LPA literature, "provides fellowship, an interchange of ideas, solutions to the problems unique to little people, and moral support."

"In particular, we hope to increase awareness and sensitivity toward little people on campus and in general," Miller said yesterday. "It is an overlooked minority and it is a large one."

Harry McDonald, president of the Philadelphia LPA Liberty Chapter, said before the conference in Stouffer Recreation Room that "it is the first time that we've had a forum between little people and college teachers, administrators, and students."

Miller described the purpose of having such a combination. "We want to make it clear to people that dwarfs are simply regular people with small bodies," he said. "We also want to make short people aware that there is an organization to help them."

Raabe Meinhardt, who played a munchkin in the 1939 Hollywood film, *The Wizard of Oz*, said the nation has come a long way in fighting discrimination against little people.

"In 1937, I tried to get a job as an accountant, but there was no way because it was assumed that if you were short physically, you were short mentally," Raabe said. "Now, however, the situation has changed drastically and there are consequently little people in almost every position available."

Although little people still experience problems of access to various things like telephones and elevators, the fun-

(Continued on page 2)

'Little People' Conference

(Continued from page 1)

damental problems seem to be social.

"The only difficulties that I find are social," LPA Liberty Chapter Vice President Sydel Gabrielsen said. "People see differences and they don't understand them, and they are thus apprehensive of such people."

University Handicapped Programs Coordinator Sally Johnson said she has worked toward overcoming access problems for short-statured people, yet she believes that the social problems for such students remain.

"I do think that there is unbelievable discrimination, be it conscious or unconscious," she said after the conference. "There is one student in a professional school who is experiencing a great deal of discrimination."

According to Miller, people have a tendency to baby and overprotect little people.

"The people that really bother us are those that kneel to speak to us and those that say, 'Isn't he cute?' " he said.

"Sometimes in a scientific experiment, the professor may say, 'Why don't you stay out because you're too low and chemicals might get in your eyes,' " Miller added. "What they fail to realize is that we have lived with our condition all our lives and that we are aware of what we can and cannot do."

Gabrielsen said overcoming this social discrimination was a major objective of the seminar and LPA as a whole.

"There is a tendency to look upon someone that is physically different as completely different," she said. "But they're not -- they're the same. This is what we're trying to show people of both short and average stature."

TRY IT ON

By Lisa Green

A LITTLE PERSON CAN GIVE A LOT

When Harry McDonald, president of the Philadelphia Chapter of Little People of America (L.P.A.), invited Penn junior Paul Steven Miller to the chapter's next meeting, Miller responded with his own invitation.

"I figured," he explains, "if I didn't want to schlep out to Upper Darby or to the Northeast, why not bring the meeting to me?"

An experienced leader, both on campus and in his East Northport, N.Y., community, Miller quickly arranged a one-day program that would include sensitivity workshops, a campus tour, discussion groups, and a covered-dish luncheon. He invited members of the L.P.A. and the general public—"Penn people and little people," he says, "from bouncing babies to senior citizens, from Ivy League students to real-estate salesmen." And, in the course of planning the day, he realized that the late November meeting on campus "would enable Penn people—students, faculty, and administrators—to learn a little more about myself. Through the meeting, I'll be able to open up another facet of my life to people."

Paul Miller is an associate director of Students Helping Students, a member of the dean's advisory committee in the College, a featured actor with Mask and Wig, and a resident of Stouffer College House. He is 20 years old, and he is four-and-a-half-feet tall. His physical condition, which is called achondroplasia, is a growth disorder that occurs once in every 10,000 births. Unlike hormonal dwarfism, in which the body stays proportionally small due to a lack of growth hormones, achondroplasia is an incurable genetic disorder in which the growing ends of the bones in the arms and legs harden prematurely.

"Even though I do have physical problems associated with my height," Miller says (he has had five operations and wears a back brace during the day), "I do feel lucky because I am able to get around—some little people need wheelchairs." His condition has been followed by medical research specialists at Johns Hopkins University since 1969, and he has successfully "guinea pigged" for other scientific studies.

"A few years ago," he recalls, "a new syndrome I had was named the Paul Miller, or P.M., syndrome. Now, every time I see my doctor at a symposium, he'll say, 'Hey, Paul, I found five new people with your disease."

Each year, Miller returns to Johns Hopkins to speak before an audience of little people, their relatives and friends, and professionals in medicine and social work at the Short Stature Symposium. Last June, he led a workshop on coping with college.

He points to a man seated in the foreground of the group photograph taken at the symposium. "See, this man here is a Penn Law School alumnus, he graduated Penn law in the late Fifties, early Sixties. He is chairman of the board of Glassboro State College. He was president of the New Jersey Bar Association, he was a judge, and he is presently the district attorney for Gloucester County, right outside of Philadelphia. He's my role model—a brilliant, brilliant man," Miller says convincingly.

Of an estimated 200,000 Americans with growth disorders, only between 2,000 and 3,000 are members of the L.P.A., which Billy Barty, the actor, founded in 1958 as a national support group and social organization. Miller has been a member of L.P.A. since infancy and an active member since adolescence.

"Not everyone," he explains, "knows about the organization. A lot of people know about it and don't want to have anything to do with it because, in some respects, they seem to have a lot of difficulty accepting themselves."

With some hesitation, Miller attended his first L.P.A. convention in Lancaster, Pa., back in 1979.

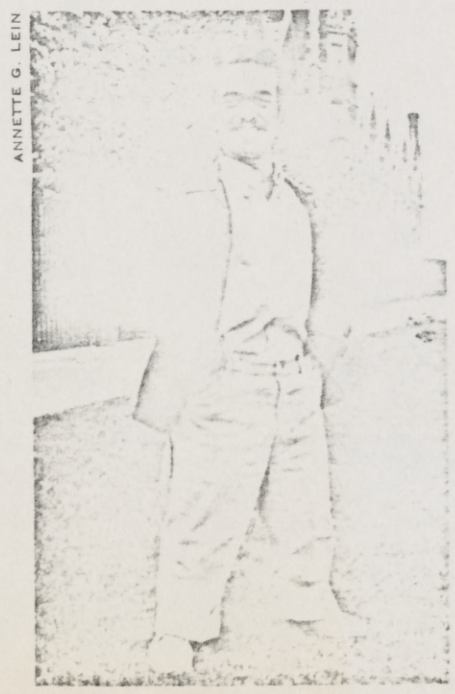
"When I first walked into the lobby," he recalls, "it was wall-to-wall little people. I walked in and said, 'Oh my God, look at all the little people, this is just horrible.'

"After a while, of course, you begin to take it for granted that you can talk with someone eye to eye. When you come out of a convention and back into the real world, it's a little bit of a shock."

Like most little people, Miller must concern himself with the potential obstacles of any new environment. He compliments the University administration and the Office of Equal Opportunity for easing his adjustment to college. This year, he will serve as a member of the campus committee charged with removing architectural barriers for handicapped students.

His relaxed attitude about Penn ("I feel I've been very accepted here") is tempered by a sense of social responsibility. "When people look at me," he explains, "a lot of times I feel that I am the token little person, that, in a lot of respects, I represent little people."

The L.P.A. meeting at Penn provided Paul Miller with one more opportunity to further, through education, his commitment to the members of his organization. As he explains: "I feel very strongly about education. Many times, aptitude is associated with physical ability, especially height—this society is very height-oriented. Education can overcome these prejudices. With better credentials, little people will have better opportunities."



Paul Miller: *more than a little involved*

Lisa Green is a senior in the College majoring in political science. She hails from Fair Lawn, N.J.

THE PAUL Jones family of Mentor queue up for an early spring bike ride. Paul, left to right, Ellie, Melissa, 13 and Jeff, 11, find life as little people has its ups and downs. Mostly ups--"We're not making the world adjust to us," says Jones, "we're going up to it." (Photo by Lois Vidaver)

Dwarf wins 'hardship' job despite U.S. hiring freeze

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Robert Van Etten, a 3-foot-3 dwarf who won a hardship exemption from President Reagan's hiring freeze, began work Monday as a $32,048-a-year engineer for the government.

Van Etten, president of the Little People of America, a group of several thousand people with the medical condition of dwarfism, sold his belongings in Orlando, Fla., after he was told to report for work in Washington in January.

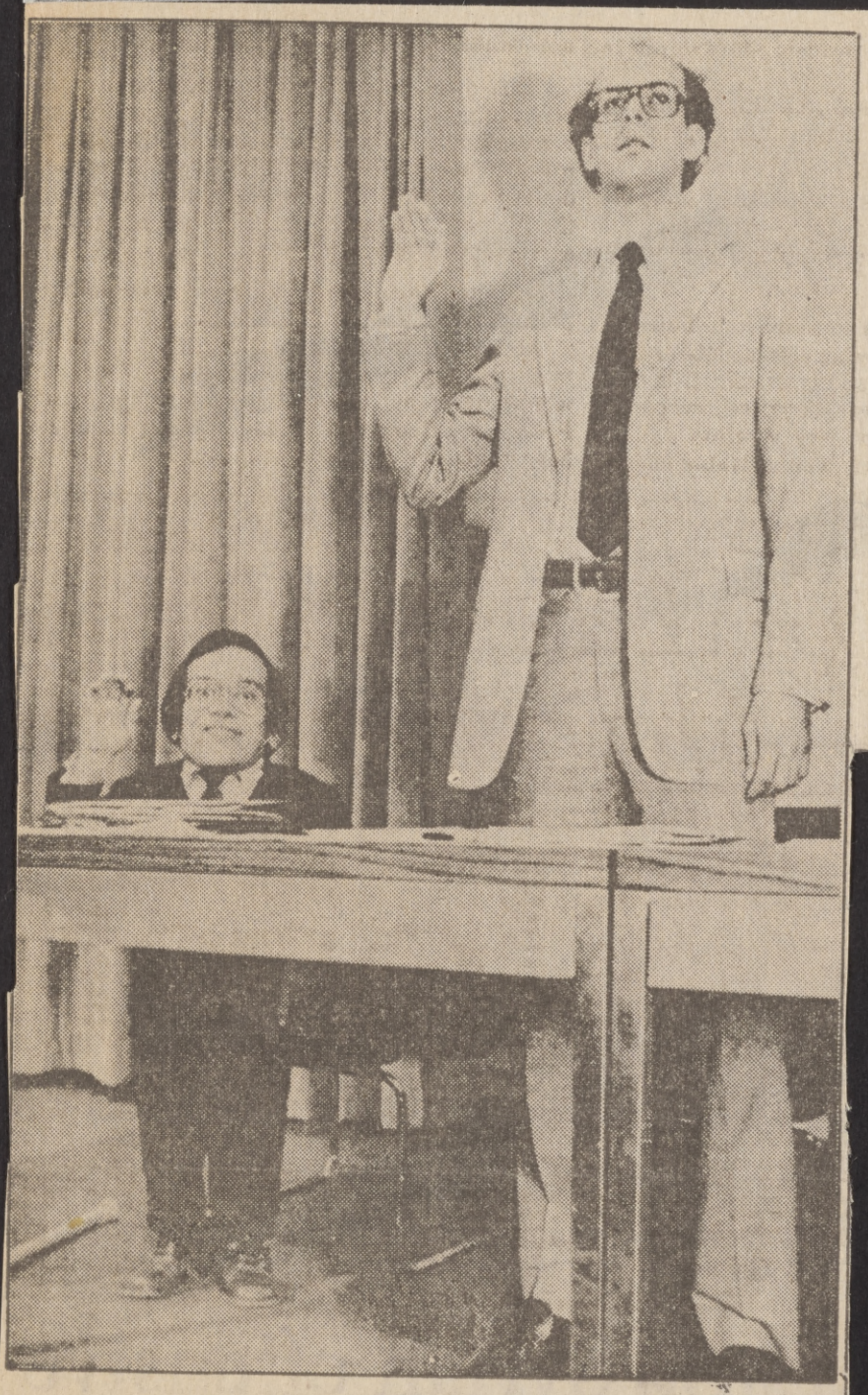
When he arrived Jan. 26 to be sworn in for the job at the Architectural Transportation Barriers' Compliance Board, he was told he had become a victim of Reagan's hiring freeze.

The Department of Education, which handles administrative chores for the independent board, later sought and won hardship exemptions for Van Etten and 22 others.

But Van Etten's victory may be short-lived. The handicapped rights agency where he works has been targeted for oblivion by the Reagan administration as of Oct. 1.

"At least I'll have time to situate myself," he said.

"In the meantime, I'm going to try to do as much as I can in hopes that maybe the board will survive the budget cuts," he said.



Associated Press

Robert Van Etten, a dwarf from Orlando, Fla., and Todd Buchta are sworn in Monday in Washington during their first day as government workers. Etten was promised a job before President Reagan instituted a government hiring freeze, but was told upon reaching Washington that he didn't have a job. He appealed and got the job.

By LOIS VIDAVER
Staff Reporter

MENTOR—Riddle: Why did the man who wanted to go to the 15th floor in the elevator get off at the 13th and walk up the rest of the way?

Give up? Answer: Because he couldn't reach the 15th floor button.

The Paul Jones family of Mentor can relate to that. "We've been there," says Mrs. Jones.

The Jones' are little people. Husband Paul is just 42 inches; wife Ellie, 41 inches; daughter Melissa, 13, and son Jeff, 11, are also little. Jeff has a potential of 48 to 51 inches when he is fullgrown; Melissa probably will be taller.

Elevator buttons are not the only inconvenience when you're of short stature.

When Mrs. Jones shops for the weekly groceries, what she wants is sometimes high above her. "I'll try to reach up for an item", she says, "and if I can't, I decide if I can do without it. If I think I can't, I look around for a friendly face and then ask him or her to get it for me."

Public telephones are a problem, too. "Usually I can dial," says Mrs. Jones, "but someone else has to put the dimes in."

"Telephone booths have improved," adds Jones, "ever since an awareness of the needs of the handicapped. We just look around for a phone booth that's made for a wheelchair."

The Jones' are dwarfs. Note that — dwarfs, not midgets. The term midget is a slang word to them they'd rather not hear. The Munchkins in the movie, "Over the Rainbow" are midgets — perfectly formed little people who lack a growth hormone produced by the pituitary gland.

Dwarfs are built differently — their trunks keep growing but their limbs do not. "The reason we are disproportionate," says Mrs. Jones, "is that the calcium in our long limbs calcified before our full growth was reached. It starts doing that prematurely."

Dwarf babies are born with enlarged heads and large trunks. Because of the weight of the head, physical development is slow. They don't turn over until later than average children. They don't walk until they're 2.

Bowlegs are a common deformity in "achondroplasia," the medical term for dwarfism, and causes pain, numbness, limited joint function, and a waddling gait.

"I can tell another little person even in a darkened movie," says Mrs. Jones, "because of their waddle."

Paul and Ellie were born into "average families," a term they prefer rather than "normal." "That makes us sound abnormal," says Paul, "and we're not. We're just shorter than average." No one in either family was a dwarf, "which is the usual situation," says Mrs. Jones.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., Mrs. Jones remembers that her late parents treated her with respect and never sheltered her, but that they "took me to every kind of doctor there was" to help her grow. "I went to chiropractors, chiropodists, podiatrists, orthopedics. Some said to wait until I had full growth and then come back for treatment; others said I should have come in earlier. They just didn't know what to do with me."

Did the other children taunt a little person who stayed little?

"I was stared at," says Mrs. Jones. "And it embarrassed me. I would go to bed at night and pray that I would wake up in the morning tall with straight limbs."

She is a graduate of James Madison High School, and Brooklyn College with a major in sociology and minor in speech and theatre. "I had visions of going into social work," she says. "I wanted to be a probation officer, but my height was against me." The requirement was five feet, two inches. Ellie didn't qualify.

She worked as a secretary for the American Civil Liberties Union for awhile and as an administrative assistant at Brooklyn College.

Then Ellie found her dream job. She was hired on as a social investigator for the Welfare Department. But during her going-away party at Brooklyn College, she received a phone call — "Somebody found out that there was a height requirement, and I was out again."

Now, Ellie, in retrospect, realizes that her own safety was the cause of concern — she was going into parts of the city unprotected where her smallness would leave her vulnerable. But that didn't stop the hurt.

"I felt discriminated against," she says. She is presently a part-time secretary at the Mentor Christian Church.

Jones is a graduate of Newbury High School and Dyke College in Cleveland with a bachelor's degree in business administration. "I wanted to be an accountant for the FBI," he states.

His family operated the P.J. Geauga Beverage store in Newbury.

He was an accountant for API Instruments in Chesterland for 20 years and is now a purchasing agent for Machine Controls Corporation in Mentor.

Paul remembers wondering, when he was growing up, where all the other little people were. Were they all in circuses?

"I would think, 'Why am I this way? How often does it happen?'

"And then as I got older my family would say, 'Why don't you find a little girl like yourself?'"

He did. Ellie and he met at a Little People in America (LPA) convention in Phoenix, Ariz. They've been married 15 years.

Little People of America, Inc. was begun in 1957 in California by Billy Bartie, one of the "Munchkins" who was appearing in "Over the Rainbow." Only one percent of the LPA members are show business people now.

More may be added to the ranks. "There is a new show being produced called "Under the Rainbow," says Jones. "The studio came to an LPA convention and invited little people to sign up for it. Some of our friends are out in California now."

Little People of America is made up of families — some little people, some not. There are 4,000 members.

"Little people need to meet other little people," says Jones. "It's nice to look someone in the eye."

Mrs. Jones was about 22 years old when she attended a meeting with 15 or 16 other people. Like her husband, she had never met any other little people before. "I walked in and thought, 'Hey, they're just like me. I felt more comfortable with them. I didn't give up my life with average-sized people, of course. But I learned a lot from my new friends."

One important thing was how to drive. She had gone to a driver's school and because no one was aware of how to build up a gas or brake pedal, she was sent to a school for the handicapped to learn to drive by hand controls. The other little people could share helpful hints that made life that much easier.

The Jones drive two regular-sized cars now with extensions on the pedals.

Mrs. Jones was very influential in getting little people the medical help they need. In 1965, she read about Dr. Victor McKusick, geneticist and heart specialist at The Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions in Maryland and his studies on Amish intermarriage. The marriages of close relatives were resulting in the birth of dwarfs, as well as babies with heart deformities. Mrs. Jones wrote to Dr. McKusick and invited him to attend a national convention in Gloucester City, N.J. He attended, and dwarfism became a special interest of his. In 1967 both the Jones went to Johns Hopkins for a week of study. "They took saliva tests on us, pieces of bone, pieces of skin, anything that would help them know more about dwarfism," remembers Mrs. Jones.

There is now a yearly Short Stature Symposium sponsored by the hospital. "This is the ninth year for it," says Mrs. Jones. "It lasts for two days. The first is devoted to workshops for teenagers, marriage counseling, how to get a job. The second day is a clinic, when the little people go to the doctors."

The hospital has a one-year waiting list of patients desiring treatment and surgery to correct orthopedic deformities. Jeff had surgery performed there in October which straightened his legs and added two inches to his height.

There have been tragedies connected with the lack of knowledge about dwarfism. Only one in every 100,000 children is born with achondroplasia.

"Many times a pediatrician has never seen a dwarf child," says Mrs. Jones. "One baby we know of was diagnosed as hydrocephalic because of his enlarged

Mrs. Jones uses a stool to help reach the stove.

Public attitudes target of couple

By REED SEIDEN

Part of the function of Little People of America, say Al and Harriet Stickney, is it facilitates the clearing up of misconceptions surrounding people such as themselves.

The Stickney's, little people in the parlance of their organization, or short-statured people, achondroplastic dwarfs in medical terms, are involved in redefining the very names by which they and people like them are known.

The labels and myths attached to short-statured people in the past are baggage no one should have to carry around with them, the Stickneys feel.

"You have to go way back in history," says Harriet a school teacher, "to when dwarfs in the court were a step above a pet. And there's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs and all the rest."

San Bruno residents, the Stickneys have both been active in LPA, as they call Little People of America, taking on leadership roles. Al was district director of the organization for six years and Harriet was vice-president for four years. She is also a special correspondent for the LPA News, the bi-monthly organ of the group.

Al is a management level employee for United Airlines and Harriet has now left teaching "because when he started working different shifts I felt I wouldn't have enough time to be with him."

E-J photo by REED SEIDEN

Al Stickney, a management employee for United Airlines and his wife Harriet, a school teacher, are active in Little People of America. The Stickneys were interviewed at their home recently, distinguished by a "lowered kitchen," remodeled to put the stove and sink six inches closer to the ground.

Their respective stations in life are important to them because, as Harriet put it, "I wanted people to evaluate me as a teacher, not as a dwarf." She had trouble landing her first job, though.

She is acutely interested in the general perception of dwarfism, and likes to read novels "with short-statured heroes so I can see how they are depicted."

In Japan, "dwarfism is considered a curse upon the family," Harriet explains.

(Continued on page 14)

Little people

(Continued from page 1)

In some primitive cultures, it is considered magical. The aim of LPA is to get across the point that "we are human."

What the organization provides is similarly simple. According to Harriet: "Encouragement."

The organization was founded in 1957 by Billy Barty, a short-statured TV actor. One of its foremost aims is to "get little people into the mainstream of life," says Al. "At one time the only jobs little people had was in the circus, as freaks."

Much concern is directed toward "little littles," short-statured children and toward parents, average-sized adults of short-statured children.

LPA offers this thought to its members: "A small person can live in two worlds—a small world and an average size world. A person who finds happiness in both worlds has nothing to lose to society or himself. But a person who hides in one of the two worlds must always live with the fear of evasion or contact with the other world. For this person, there is no real truth—not even to himself."

Don't Sweat The Small Stuff

A short saga on Hollywood and the Little People

By Umberto Tosi/Photography by Bonnie Schiffman

Gracie Oliver from Grosse Pointe, Michigan, who is 22 and stands 34 inches with the help of tiny crutches, was having a look around Beverly Hills along with two friends, Jean and Rose. All three were in town for the 22nd annual convention of the Little People of America. For atmosphere, we lunched on cold salmon at the Polo Lounge and got to talking about how little people are portrayed on the screen. Not much from which to choose, was their verdict: freaks, clowns, newsboys, and childlike characters of which "Fantasy Island's" Tattoo is currently the most noted example.

"Now Michael Dunn, there was an actor," said Gracie. "Even when he played a villain he was real."

Such considerations are of more than passing aesthetic concern. They have a lot to do with how people like Gracie are perceived by the rest of us, and with what she has to handle out there every day. From putting our waiter at ease with a few jokes, to once being chased off a cable car in San Francisco by a jeering, kicking pack of teen-age rodents.

"So then, what was your reaction when you first saw *The Wizard of Oz*?" I asked. There was a pause. "You know, the munchkins and all," I added and at once felt silly as Gracie fixed me with her sprightly blue eyes.

"I guess they presented a positive image," she answered half-heartedly. I realized suddenly that she didn't identify with munchkins, but with Dorothy, just like anyone else.

This business of how little people see themselves as opposed to how Hollywood and the public at large see them was to grow into an issue that threatened to become divisive for the LPA, something no one wanted, because the group is as much a family as an organization.

This controversy came to center on two men, both of them reluctant to be drawn into open battle. These two wise and wary warriors were the LPA's founding father, actor Billy Barty, and its new national president, Bobby Van Etten. The two of them found themselves stand-ins for the real disputants, the little people and their Hollywood stereotypes.

During the week at the Pacifica Hotel in smoggy Culver City where the LPA convention was quartered, the 800 attending little people kept coming face to face with Hollywood's fun-house mirror. There were bus excursions to Universal Studios, Disneyland, the movie star's homes, and television tapings. In addition to the usual convention functions and festivities, there was a "Movie Character Night" in the hotel's plastic-paneled second-floor ballroom, a more likely scene of sales awards dinners than masquerades. Little people showed up in elaborate costumes. Three and four-foot tall Mae Wests, W.C. Fieldses, Judy Garlands, Marilyn Monroes, Supermen, Charlie Chaplins, Princess Leias and Darth Vaders crowded the floor.

Members of a Hollywood film crew set up videotape equipment in a side room and the costumed little people crowded in to parade in front of the cameras. The crew was from Innovisions/ECA, the production company for the movie *Under The Rainbow*, which was about to go into shooting and is scheduled for release this month by Warners. (Filming, delayed by the actors' strike, got underway October, 1980.)

The old tinseltown tug was hard to resist with the camera rolling and all this talk about who would be cast in the film. Part of the reason this was a record LPA convention turnout, according to the convention's chairman Charles M. Secor, a Los Angeles schoolteacher, was that many had come in hopes of getting a part in *Under the Rainbow*.

The odds were against it, but there always was that chance. The film, starring Chevy Chase and Carrie Fisher, would employ about 150 little people in spoken parts and as extras. Its story is a comedy, spy-spoof that takes place largely in Culver City during the filming of *The Wizard of Oz* in 1938. The plot revolves around a Japanese spy and a Nazi dwarf agent who run afoul of the movie-

Forty years later Little People's Association members pose before what was the Culver Hotel where the Munchkin actors stayed

munchkins at the Culver Hotel, where the munchkin-players actually were put up in 1938 and which still stands only a few miles from the Pacifica.

The movie was the brainchild of Ed Cohen, its executive producer; Fred Bauer, producer and collaborator on the screenplay; and Pat McCormick, who had a hand in the screenplay and also plays a part in the film. Cohen and Bauer previously had collaborated on *The Buddy Holly Story*, and fresh from its success were able to get Orion/Warners backing for their new project.

To pull off the new project, however, the team had to solve the same problem faced 42 years ago by the makers of *The Wizard of Oz*, that is, they had to round up enough little people. This isn't easy because dwarfism is a comparatively rare condition (see page 35), and there are relatively few little people actors.

Forty-two years ago there was no LPA, so Metro Goldwyn Mayer solved its problem by contracting with agents for about 125 circus "midgets" to play munchkins. Much of the legendary rowdiness of this munchkin-group is exaggerated, though some can be attributed to the fact that they all were circus people. They comprised, in a way, the first little people's convention. With nothing else but the making of the film to hold them together, however, this initial group drifted apart, although some stayed on in Hollywood, including some from an Austrian circus troupe, who as it turned out, had gotten out of their homeland just in time to escape the Nazis who probably would have exterminated them.

For the makers of *Under the Rainbow*, the problem was solved by the Little People of America. Bauer and other members of Innovisions/ECA went scouting at the 1979 national convention in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The LPA has been burned before by photographers and filmmakers and is guarded about media intrusion. "They keep exploiting little people as symbols rather than portraying them as human beings," says Audre Boursay, a Palo Alto social worker and longtime LPA member.

To allay these fears, Bauer and John Lytle, *Rainbow's* unit production manager, assured the LPA board at the Lancaster convention that the film would be a "family-oriented comedy that would pre-

In an LPA group shot the one visiting member from another country holds the bag with a special message for her

sent little people in a positive light." That and the prospect of Innovisions/ECA casting 150 to 200 little people, more than any film since *The Wizard of Oz*, secured the LPA's cooperation.

Without promising him a part, the *Rainbow* people also had touched base with Barty, a veteran actor who has appeared in more than 130 films and television shows, including *WC and Me*, *Day of the Locust* and *Foul Play*. The three-foot-nine-inch Barty, 55, is sort of the George Washington of the LPA. When he appears on stage, as he does at every national convention, you can feel the waves of love washing up from the applauding crowd and watch him taking it all in a good-natured, wisecracking way.

He got the LPA started back in 1958 when he was appearing with the Spike Jones band in Reno. Together with a public relations man for Reno's Riverside Hotel, he organized a convention of little people, billed as "Midgets of America." In those days, says Barty, "you were either a midget or a dwarf." He got support from Reno boosters, whose town bills itself as "The Biggest Little City in the World." Only about 30 little people showed up, mostly show business friends of Barty's who came in from Los Angeles, but he had bigger plans.

Two years later he organized another convention, this time in Las Vegas, wangling cooperation from the Hacienda Hotel. By now he was going after membership in earnest, expanding the group from its Hollywood nucleus. With the help of two other little people friends, Barty started a nationwide membership campaign. The three spent weeks calling hospitals, civic groups, police stations, schools, chambers of commerce, adoption agencies, and various other civic and private social agencies around the country to locate little people. By convention time they had more than 200 members, including Shirley, whom Barty met at that 1960 convention and married in 1962. They now have two children, Lori 17, who also is a little person, and Braden, 10, who will be average-sized.

From that point the LPA grew into a national organization with local and regional chapters, a self-help support group, providing its members with medical, educational, psychological and career counseling.

The LPA, remained first and foremost a social organization. Little people get together with others like themselves and, for the week of a convention, they don't have to be *different;* they can be, and celebrate themselves.

There are pitfalls. Some LPA members, as Boursay puts it, "live 51 weeks just waiting for the one week of the convention." But the mutual reinforcement of confidence and self-esteem outweighs the problems.

Today, the LPA membership incorporates a wide range of ages, professions, and personal styles. It is Al Stickney, a United Airlines maintenance executive, and his wife, Harriet, a retired school-teacher from San Bruno; it's Peter Risch, a young, intense, 32-inch tall, bearded jazz-rock musician with a custom set of drums who plays in L.A. with his group, *Shady Past;* it's Annis Arthur, a San Francisco social worker; Lee Kitchens, a vice president at Texas Instruments; Daniel Margulies, an engineer from Vallejo, California; Nancy Rowell, an Iowa government worker who holds a black belt in Karate; Ed Lange, editor-in-chief of the Miami Beach *Sun Reporter;* Bob Bell, an Orange County accountant, and George A. Beahm, III, a New York businessman.

Bobby Van Etten, 30, a biomedical engineer from south Florida, was elected the LPA's national president during the L.A. convention. He is typical of those who now hold the most influence in the LPA. Always dapperly dressed, often in custom-tailored three-piece suits with a flower in the lapel, the three-foot-four-inch Van Etten projects a steely self-possession from beneath his stylish, affable mein.

Being near the beach is a major reason why there are so many conventions booked into the Los Angeles area

"It has given me a challenge," he says of his dwarfism, a rare kind called spondylo-epiphysical dysplaysia congenita, or SED. This is a type of dwarfism characterized by a short trunk, sway back and tendency of the hips to dislocate. Van Etten spent his childhood in braces, walking when he was seven only with the help of crutches. His feet turned out at 180 degree angles.

For most of his life, Van Etten erroneously thought his condition was due to his mother's rubella during pregnancy. It wasn't until 1976 that he made contact with the LPA and through it met doctors who accurately diagnosed his condition. Under the care of McKusick at Johns Hopkins he had a series of complex leg operations and therapy that straightened his feet and allowed him to walk with a cane. (And do a lot of dancing at the convention as well.)

None of his problems, however, stopped him from earning his masters degree and from being active in student affairs, getting to and from school in his hand-controlled car and negotiating his way around campus with an electrically-powered miniature bicycle built by an engineering student friend. During this period, he organized disabled university students state-wide and got the Florida legislature to release funds to help them "There were a lot of physical difficulties I had to overcome," he says, "and each time I made a step it made me stronger."

Van Etten sees the social aspects of the LPA as having importance beyond the good times obviously enjoyed by its members. "The organization provides a forum for little people to make contact with other little people and show how they can improve their lives. The best way to do that is to let them mix, and realize through contacts that other little people have made it. They are their own best teachers. That's what it did for me."

The main thing he wants to do as the LPA's new national president is boost morale and membership. Also securing rights and facilities for the handicapped, a cause in which many little people have allied themselves with groups for the disabled, working for easier access to buildings, putting elevator buttons, pay phones and other essential public conveniences within reach of people in wheelchairs as well as little people. Most importantly, continue to improve the public image of little people. This counts both for the self-esteem of members and the regard of average-sized who even nowadays often need convincing when it comes to hiring little people, and treating them as capable adults in general.

Afew days after the convention, Van Etten came by a copy of the script for *Under the Rainbow*. There already had been grumblings about it by some trying out for parts during the convention, talk about kinky innuendoes.

Van Etten didn't like what he read and passed the script copy around to other members of the LPA's board of directors who were likewise offended. Like any new president inheriting a problem, he proceeded cautiously. "We don't want to be telling the membership what to do," he said, "but we can't have the LPA in the position of even indirectly endorsing this as it is now." They discussed calling for an LPA boycott, but this, Van Etten said, probably would have been asking for too much of a sacrifice.

The biggest problem was that having looked at the script, Van Etten, and other LPA members who saw it, including Daniel Margulies, who had been the group's press officer, felt that the LPA had been taken in. "This isn't the kind of picture they said they were going to make when they came to us for cooperation last year in Lancaster," said Margulies.

Later I had a chance to see a copy of a script passed to me by other sources. It was a revision dated July 21, 1980, only six days before the film originally was set to be shot (later postponed by the long actors' strike). This version was short on characterization, wit, or even fresh gags, and long on tired cliche "midget" sight

During the costume ball one LPA member contemplated J.R.'s revenge.

gags. Examples of attempts at humor included the dwarf spy *seig heil*ing Hitler in the crotch, "midgets" as the script describes them throughout, climbing drapes, standing on each others' shoulders inside a long raincoat, spraying each other with whipped cream, tweaking a woman's breast, a waitress who asks an LP customer if he wants his "nuts crushed," an Irish drunk house detective (played by McCormick) lured into a hotel room by little seductive women, one with whip and boots, tied down Gulliver-style. In fairness, it must be noted that big people were stereotyped also — a mama-mia Italian, blacks gambling and listening to Duke Ellington, for example — and there also are good characters as well as bad, one of the heroes remarking about FDR, "He's a cripple. If he can be president, then I can be somebody."

Not much of the 130-page script, however, had anything to do with its purported backdrop — the filming of *The Wizard of Oz* and neither did it play off of any of the interesting possibilities that the legendary 1938 gathering of munchkin-players suggests. There are plenty of real, human, and comic situations that grow out of little people interacting with average-sized people and each other. In overreaching for sight gags, however, the script's authors apparently even forgot that the action was taking place in the 1930s and had grinning Japanese tourists running around with cameras.

After considering the matter, Van Etten decided neither to play political activist nor film critic in response to this. He and the LPA Executive Committee simply sent out a letter to all members saying that "from the script and other indications, it appears that the film has drastically changed from a family film which would show little people in a beneficial manner to an adult movie that would portray little people in a derogatory and demeaning way."

The letter further cautioned anyone who was considering taking a part in the film to read the script carefully, and "consider how they will be viewed by the public, their friends and family, and think about the impact of this film on the image and public perception of all little people before deciding to participate."

Asked about this, Executive Producer Cohen said, "I think it's a political ploy by the new leaders of the LPA who just were elected. I see nothing objectionable in this film. It's supposed to be a comedy. Tall people in the film are funny."

Stoutly denying that the film would contain anything detrimental to little people, Cohen added, "I've come into contact with a lot of little people in the course of making this film and I see them as just like you and me. This film portrays them as that. It will do more for little people than any film ever has done. Lots of people don't know much about little people and this will be reaching young audiences, ages 13 to 25. This is going to be a very big film."

Producer-Screenwriter Bauer indicated that a lot of the film's life will emerge just from getting people in front of the camera and letting them be themselves. Bauer, who said he had a map of the United States stuck with pins indicating where he could locate little people for his talent search, said, "I saw the energy that comes out of an LPA convention. I know we can capture that energy on film."

As filming of *Rainbow* finally started, none of the film's executives were acknowledging Van Etten's protest nor intimating that it would influence any changes in the script. Neither did the protest appear to cause any little people to quit the cast. Nevertheless, according to two little people in the cast, considerable re-writing had gone on (although this is normal to the process) and the little people parts were given greater dimension. Whether or not this was due to the LPA pressure is hard to say. There was some urging in that direction by LPA members who decided to take parts despite the LPA official disclaimer. Michael Lee Gogin, a talented pianist-singer-composer who landed a speaking part said, "I'm not going to pass up the opportunity if it comes my way, but I'll go with the idea of trying to upgrade and put

some real experience into what I play."

This is not an unfamiliar role for little people. Most take for granted the tasks of educating the average-sized people with whom they come in contact. Whether it's fair or unfair, they find themselves more often than not helping big people adjust, make eye contact, feel at ease, openly discuss stature, and so forth.

After the Van Etten missive, the next move was Barty's. By now Barty had put himself squarely in the middle of it by having secured one of the lead roles in the film, that of the Nazi spy. But it wasn't bothering him one bit. "I'm not going to do a thing about it," he said about Van Etten's protest, and neither of the two communicated during the weeks following the issuance of the LPA board's advisory letter. "I think the movie is cute," said Barty. "Sure, I don't like things about it, but then I don't like a lot of things about most movies these days."

This wasn't a case of George Washington turning into Benedict Arnold. Barty just didn't see anything all that important about the film's effect on little people one way or another. To him, as a professional actor, a part was a part. If you take a few paces back and look at it from his perspective, you could see it that way, too.

Barty could tell you about the old days, but he doesn't say much about how tough it was then for a little person. As a kid, he was part of an act with his average-sized sister, managed by his father. "Dad managed us and Mom took care of us," he says of his Italian-American family. "We traveled a lot, but I didn't grow *up* anywhere. I met my first little person in 1938. I thought he was strange. I had never thought of myself as little. I knew I was small, but not that I was little."

From 1943 to 1948, Barty quit show business to go to school. He enrolled at Los Angeles City College, and he went out for the football team. The coach said, "Well, son, I don't think we have a uniform that would fit you." "That's okay," said Barty, and had his mother sew him one, then scaled down some shoulder pads and stuffed a helmet with tissues so it would fit and showed up for practice. The coach put him on the team and designed seven plays around him. Barty was a swift sprinter in those days.

When he went on to Los Angeles State College (now University), he joined the school's first varsity basketball team, likewise becoming a key player. "All I know was I had to move fast and shoot fast."

Barty had dreams of becoming a sportswriter and eventually a coach, but it didn't work out that way. He went back to show business. He did a lot of live television in New York during the early '50s. When he returned to Los Angeles he met more little people and started thinking about forming some sort of group. "A lot of little people I met were being taken advantage of. There would be agencies that booked them in movies, TV shows and circuses, but the agents would keep most of the money," he says.

THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT

There are perhaps 200,000 in the United States people under four feet tall, and is just is an uneducated guess by the medical experts who only in the last decade have begun to understand and categorize what they now have discovered to be more than 80 kinds of dwarfism.

These types of dwarfism are, for the most part, genetic mutations, that occur rarely and randomly, not limited to any geographic, economic, racial, or ethnic group. Most types involve failure of the bones to grow normally during childhood, the most common of these conditions known as acondroplasia, in which the growing ends of the arm and leg bones harden prematurely in childhood. It occurs once in 10,000 births. In many of these types of bone disorders, the rest of the body grows normally, producing trunk and head that seem disproportionate by average standards. This differs markedly from hormonal dwarfism, in which the entire body proportionally stays small, due to lack of pituitary growth hormones in childhood. (Sometimes, pituitary dwarfs are referred to colloquially as midgets, a term that little people find offensive.) Aside from hormonal dwarfism, which sometimes can be reversed by administration of rare and expensive growth hormones, all other genetic dwarfisms are irreversible.

The majority of little people have average-sized parents. They have few contacts with other little people during childhood. Even Little People of America's membership now numbers only about 2,500. This presents a major challenge to little people trying to organize and help each other, and one of the oft-repeated goals of every LPA convention is recruiting more members.

Over the years, the LPA has become closely involved with medical researchers, most prominently from Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, where Dr. Victor McKusick pioneered research work into dwarfism, and orthopedists, led by Dr. Steven Kopits, have performed more than 750 orthopedic operations on more than 200 little people. Other medical organizations, for example UCLA's Harbor General Hospital, also have become involved with helping little people with hearing, speech, orthodontal and other health problems that sometimes are associated with various forms of short stature. Besides helping a lot of individuals, the doctors have debunked a lot of myths about little people, establishing that except for short stature and the bone problems that can occur, little people are as healthy, as long-lived, and capable as anyone else.

Although isolated cases are the rule, there are many mixed families where one or both parents are little, or the children are both average-sized and little. Since genetic mutations are spontaneous, accidental alterations of genes, it often is the case that little people are only slightly more likely than anyone else to pass on dwarfism to their children. The heredity factors are complex and depend on the type of dwarfism. Some kinds are not transmittable at all. In most, however, the best the experts can do is inform the prospective parents about their odds. Usually the odds of having a little person offspring are increased only if both parents have the same kind of dwarfism. For example, if one parent has acondroplasia the odds of having a child with the same condition are one in four. But if both parents have it, the odds become 50-50. Many LPA couples seek genetic counseling before deciding whether or not to have children. Many choose to go ahead and take the risks. One way or another, a lot of personal complex motives figure in such decisions, including especially how the prospective parent feels about dwarfism. Some little people prefer that when both parent and child are little people, the emotional problems for the child are mitigated. As for the prospect of having an average-sized child, this doesn't intimidate most little people, who are used to handling big people all the time. Being small can be an advantage with kids too, as one LPA grammar school teacher said, "You always have eye contact. The important thing is letting the kids know that psychologically, you are in charge."

There is a paradox when looking at future generations, however, in that while the whole thrust of the LPA is to make the most out of being little, there also is support for the research that one day may eradicate dwarfism. Someday there may be no more little people.

Then again, if we learn the secrets of genetically engineering our sizes at will, who knows? Perhaps in the interest of conserving planetary resources, or of reducing spaceship payloads, we may decide smaller folks should be the fashion. Then we'd all be little people. □

Continued on page 116

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THE LPA CONVENTION

Continued from page 35

fact, nobody should take that role. "People always are asking me to comment about anything pertaining to LPs," the jovial Barty shrugs, "like Herve Villechez's marriage to an average-size woman. To that I say, so what." (Villechez doesn't belong to the LPA, but, says Barty, "he lends his support.")

The motto of the Little People of America is "Think Big," which is the title of a song written by Barty, who advises us "the biggest barrier you'll ever have to overcome is the one between your ears." Barty also helps raise money for little people through his annual celebrity golf tournament at the Villa Verde Country Club in San Dimas. He now is organizing an international federation of little people's organizations. Numerous LPA-like organizations have been formed in Europe, Latin America and the Far East in recent years.

Taking a cosmic view, the fact that someone is three or four feet tall instead of five or six feet tall shouldn't make a damn bit of difference. Nevertheless, for those of average size, there is a certain psychological shock in encountering adults who are the size of children. Perhaps this has to do with the long and dependent childhood that is part of human experience, and that such encounters may vaguely evoke the earliest, most fearful and magical memories. Perhaps, too, we tend to project even deeper existential anxieties onto little people because, unlike other earthly creatures, we are capable of comprehending that we live in a universe that dwarfs us all. Such philosophical considerations, however, don't mitigate the social problems that little people must negotiate.

If you talk with a lot of little people, as I did during the Los Angeles convention, and at a previous LPA national gathering in Oakland, you begin to get a picture of the way it is. Late at night, when the conversation flows easily, they will tell you the good and the bad of it, and give you a perspective on life that is useful at any height, and all levels.

They will tell you that if you happen to stand short, you have to get used to the stares and the fact that your very existence makes many people uncomfortable. There are the folks who think you belong in a circus, or that you are some kind of elf, or that you must be retarded, or feel sorry for you, or talk baby-talk to you, or pat you on the head for good luck, or stumble over you. And there are the kids who call you Sneezy, or Grumpy, or Peter Pan, or worse, the employer who thinks you can't handle the job, and your mom and dad, God bless'm, who did their best but maybe are overprotective or still feel uptight for you when you take them to a restaurant, or the dates you had (or lost) who either were turned on or turned off because they couldn't get past seeing you as a freak.

Then there is the joke about the midget who went to the third floor because he couldn't reach the elevator button for the tenth, and you must cope with the fact that most man-made accommodations are too big for you and the bank teller can't see you over the counter so you have to talk loudly so he'll notice you are trying to cash your check. Then there was the day you looked in the mirror for a long time and realized that you were *different* and that whatever else would happen you never were going to be more than three feet tall — and three feet would have to do.

If you want to have a good time, little people will tell you, if you want to *survive*, if you want to be yourself and get people to acknowledge you as real and not a novelty item, then you can't let little things get to you. You can't sweat the small stuff, you have to learn, as the LPA motto says, to "think big."

Lots of little people, like Barty, learned this on their own. But associating with other little people has been the key for many more of them in the LPA. What makes the LPA such a lively bunch is not that they possess any qualities special to little people or to anyone else, but that most of them have, in one way or another, made a decision to think big and transcend limitations.

In the end, the contretemps over *Under the Rainbow* looks like it will become a faded family photograph of an old argument that no one cares to bring up. The LPA will go forward with its own momentum. "I'd like to think my protest heightened the awareness of some of the people working on the film," Van Etten said, donning the didactic mantle again. "Quite a few members already have written me saying that they were glad that we stood up for ourselves."

Under the Rainbow turned out to be just another film, hyperbolic Hollywood claims notwithstanding. Script doctoring and fine acting efforts by Barty and other little people didn't help it. "Maybe," comments Audre Boursay, who once was an actor-protege of Barty, "this will polarize the LPA. Everybody needs a Darth Vader, an arch-enemy. That's how groups define themselves." All Warner Brothers got, meanwhile, was another forgettable bit of summer fare and poor reviews.

Everyone was doing what comes naturally. Except in their more inspired moments, Hollywood producers just think box office and bottom line. Little People, despite their disagreements, think big. □

'Under the Rainbow': There's No Pot of Gold

By Peter Stack

Basic idiocy — which has always been with us, and, thanks to Hollywood, may always be — makes a grandstand play in "Under the Rainbow," a new movie that you can afford to miss, unless you especially wish to see scores of midgets behaving like jerks.

"Under the Rainbow," opening today around the Bay Area, is at best terrifically boring, and at worst a heavy case of dingbatry, as it were, going dong. It's a very dumb affair, ranging from plainly offensive to downright obnoxious.

An untold number of midgets fill in almost every corner of this unfortunate production, which only now and then makes room for Chevy Chase and Carrie Fisher to appear — she as a Hollywood casting woman, he as a G-man. It may have been a stroke of good fortune for every midget in the Screen Actors Guild to get work, but the general thrust of this movie is that of an "Animal House" for short people. It's really a slap at the tiny folks this film seems to want to celebrate.

Set loose in a nice hotel, the central setting for "Under the Rainbow," the little people act like an army of ill-mannered morons. If this is supposed to be harmless "family style" entertainment designed to liberate midgets from the yoke and harness of freakdom, then the folks responsible for the movie should have their heads examined. There is no comedy in this "comedy" picture, and almost no human warmth.

Apparently the makers of "Under the Rainbow" (Fred Bauer, Edward H. Cohen, Steve Rash) based the movie on a legendary incident that occured in 1938 when a group of midgets was cast as Munchkins for the "Wizard of Oz." As the tale goes, the scores of midgets were rounded up all over the country, put up in the old Culver Hotel, and upon discovering their kinship, engaged in a prolonged and wild orgy. Or so the story went, as told by press agents to Hollywood columnists.

The more likely story of what really happened at the Culver Hotel is that the Munchkins were happy to see large numbers of their fellows under one roof. It gave them a sense of unity in a world where everyone was "normal," and this produced a certain glad spirit. It is known, however, that the midgets did work long, hard days at the studio across the street, a factor that induced tremendous fatigue. In short, their asses probably were dragging by nightfall, and they hadn't the stamina to spend the night carousing about the hotel, swinging from chandeliers, wrecking the kitchen, cavorting in dumb waiters.

Almost any way you slice it, the idea behind "Under the Rainbow" — i.e., a mass meeting of midgets — offered some opportunities for the filmmakers to give short people a human break, to elevate them out of their "freak" category. But no, the movie does just the opposite by making them obnoxious objects of ridicule.

I will say that the opening scene of the film, in which a truck is slowly approaching from a misty-murky distance across an empty field, is quite lovely. The shot lasts about 20 seconds. From there on, everything is perfectly dreadful.

Chevy Chase stands out among the midgets in 'Unde

Monday, Aug. 3, 1981

PEOP
INTER

A Little 'Superstar In the Making'

BY RUTH STEIN

Michael Lee Gogin met Prince Charles four years ago at the San Francisco Opera House. The prince came backstage after a performance of "Turandot" in which the 4-foot-3 actor and singer had appeared.

As Gogin recalled in an interview at the Olympic Club last week, everyone else in the cast was dumb struck by the presence of His Royal Highness, so Gogin, who is nothing if not self-assured, spoke up.

"I said, 'You're going to get married one of these days and you'll be looking for a court jester. Why don't you give me a call when you are?' "

Perhaps the prince has been too preoccupied with his new princess to remember this offer. At any rate, Gogin hasn't heard from him, which is just as well since he has been pretty busy himself with a budding Hollywood career.

Gogin, who, with his mop of straight blond hair looks like a miniature Paul Williams, is one of 150 little people cast in the movie, "Under the Rainbow," which opened in San Francisco this weekend. (Although an ad for the film calls them "midgets," many little people resent this term.)

While local critics have found the portrayal of little people as sex-crazed boozers to be offensive, Gogin defends the movie as "family entertainment." He doesn't even object to a line in which the little people are told they are bad and deserve to be short, explaining that it makes sense in the context in which it is said.

On one level, "Under the Rainbow" purports to tell about what happened to the Munchkins who were hired to appear in the 1938 film, "The Wizard of Oz." (Their story, however, gets more than a little lost in another plot involving G-men and Nazi agents and a romance between Chevy Chase and Carrie Fisher.)

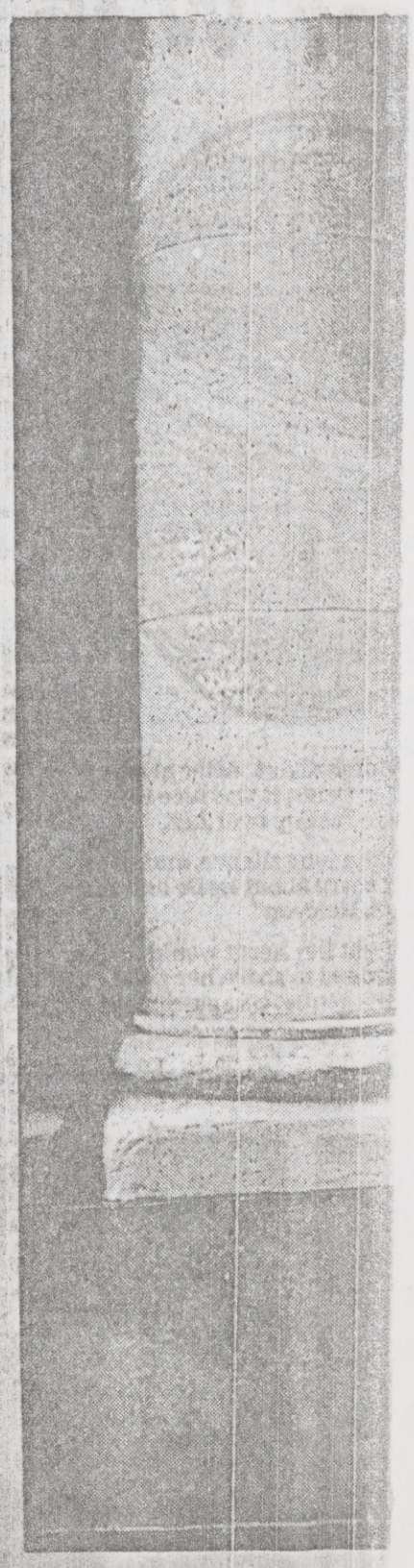
The discrimination little people experienced on the set of "The Wizard of Oz" — including open joking about their size and sexual abilities — has been reported in a book about the making of the film.

According to Gogin, who is 26 and a native San Franciscan, nothing like that went on during the six months it took to shoot "Under the Rainbow."

In fact, he said, the crew went out of its way to accommodate the little people, many of whom had never acted before, by building special ramps for them to get around and adjusting the height of telephones so they could use them.

"Everyone was treated equally," Gogin said. "We all worked as a team. I've made several films, and I found the special attention we were all given on this one unusual."

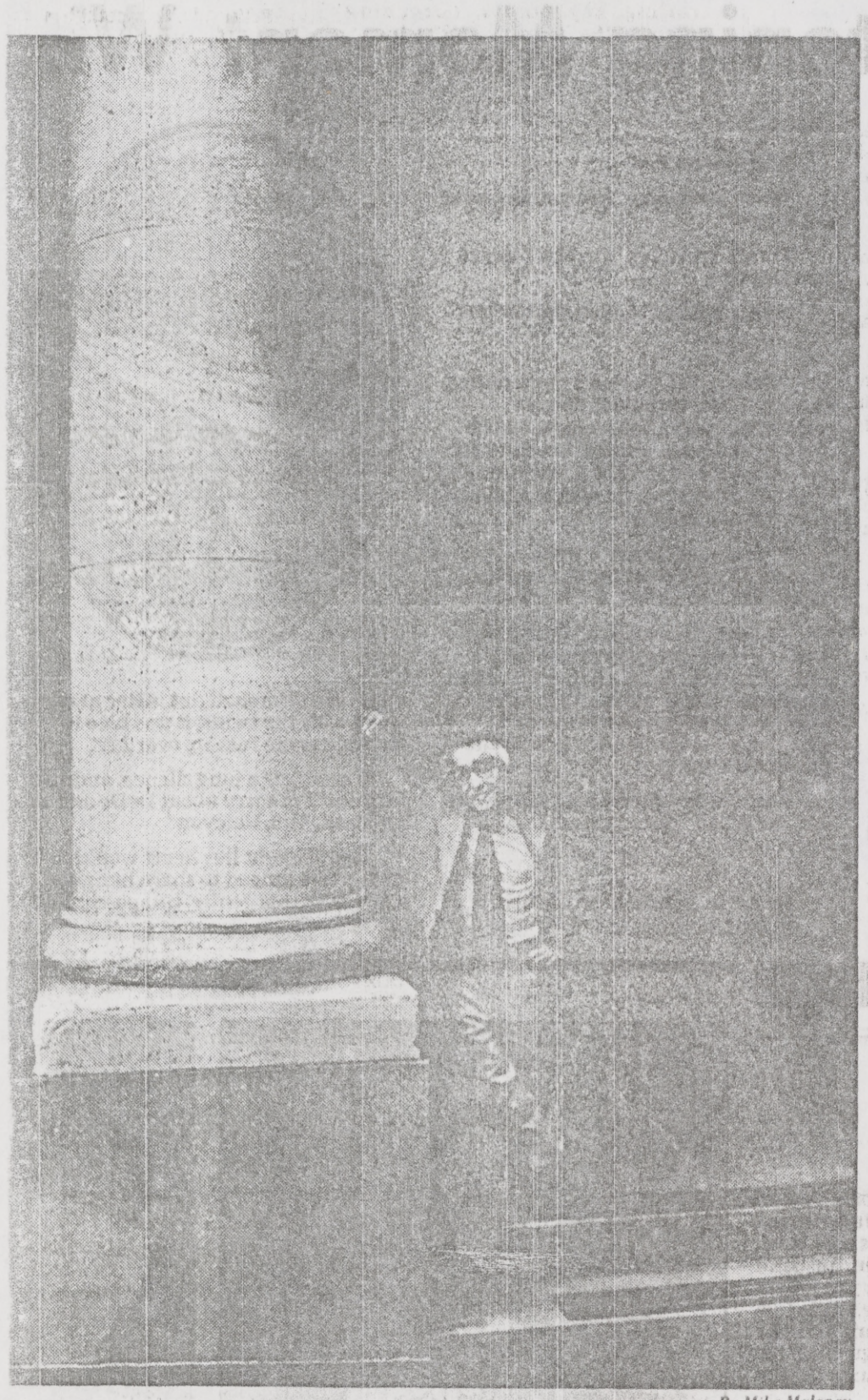
Gogin's own story would make quite a movie itself. He was born with practically no legs, no hip joints, a cleft palate and a respiratory chest problem. Doctors don't know what caused these



Michael Lee Gogin: he doesn'

PEOPLE

INTERVIEW



By Mike Maloney

ael Lee Gogin: he doesn't let physical problems stand in his way

defects, since he wasn't premature and everyone else in his family is normal size.

The first 19 years of his life were spent in and out of hospitals. He got his first plastic hip implant when he was 18, and another one a year later, making him the youngest person on the West Coast to undergo a double implant.

Because of his medical history, Gogin said, if a surgical procedure to make him taller were discovered, he wouldn't subject himself to it.

Yet Gogin appears not to have let his physical problems stop him from doing anything. He maintained a 3.4 grade average at St. Ignatius High School and straight As at San Francisco State. He taught himself to walk normally and keeps in shape by swimming daily.

His positive attitude "has a lot to do with the love and affection I got from my parents." They sacrificed to pay his medical bills (because of the extent of Gogin's disabilities, they were unable to get insurance).

Although Gogin's first love is music — he sings, plays the guitar and piano, composes "easy listening" music and once had his own rock group called "Gogin With Stature" — he has found more opportunities as an actor.

To take advantage of them, he and his wife, Darla Richardson Gogin, recently moved to Los Angeles. She is 5-foot-2 but said the disparity in their heights bothered her "only on our first date. After that, I forgot all about it."

Gogin just finished playing a 9-year-old in "The Last Horror Movie," with George Kennedy and Stella Stevens. "Because of the type of language the boy uses, they didn't want to hire a child," he explained.

So far all his roles have somehow capitalized on his size. He portrayed Toulouse-Lautrec in a local play called "Vive, Paris, Vive," a Hobbit in the film "Lord of the Rings" and a robot on the television show "The Reluctant Robot."

But Gogin is confident that eventually he will be hired solely for his acting ability and that he will have a chance at the same parts as normal-size people.

"This will happen because of my talent. You're looking at a superstar in the making," he said, smiling.

GLEN & PAULA GAYLEY with BRADLEY 8, 2nd grader who enjoys spelling, reading, gets "A's" on all spelling tests, loves soccor; JULIE, 2½, friendly, loves outdoors with brother, loves to visit "Papaw" & "Mamaw" (Ralph & Myrtle Petty) in Buena Park. 1-81

CORKY HUBBERT AND MICHAEL GILDEN...ON THE SET "UNDER THE RAINBOW". WATCH FOR THEM JULY 31.

TERRY CASTILLO - JOHN ALLEN - FROM CASTING DAYS...HISTORY NOW.....

JIM HAGEN, JIMMY RAY LOYLESS, AND OUR OWN PAM YBARRA--OUR LPA CELEBRITIES AT THE BBF GOLF TOURNAMENT.....

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SUE AND GEORGE ROSSITTO--WAY BACK WHEN?? A GREAT COUPLE.....

JULY BIRTHDAYS

1 Penny Brown, George Moore, Eliz. Arroyo
2 Danny Norvell
3 Michael Gogin
4 Miriam Brookfield, Ruth Martinez
6 Tanya Banks
7 Shirley Barty; Mary Lou Sberna
9 Brenda Myers (aux)
16 Margo Apostolos, Jeffrey Ocone
18 Dee Armstrong
19 Martin McCoy
20 Stephen Welch
22 Ramiro Contreras, Brenda Garman
23 Ruth Duccini
24 Braden Barty, Lou Carry
25 Manuel Gonzales (aux)
26 Mimi (Wade) Becker
28 Howard Brookfield, Debbie Brookfield
29 Richard Cook
30 Margarita Tovar (aux); Lee Poppie, and hubby, Frank Poppie II.

11-81 mike + marilyn Hery

1981

SHIRLEY LESCHANDER: Burbank's best Postmistress; PAM YBARRA: "I use CREST--have you tried it?"

BILLY BARTY has two great experiences lately...one that will go down in history...and the other, just a great happening, or whatever! First, he had his very own star placed in the sidewalk on Hollywood Boulevard (across from Mann's Chinese Theater) with many of his own celebrity fans in attendance, plus family and friends. And then there was the highlight of the Boggie Busters Golf Tournament that BILLY and his wife, SHIRLEY, attended in Dayton, Ohio--and that was meeting and shaking hands with the Vice President of the United States, GEORGE BUSH, and his WIFE. They also met TIP O'NEAL. There were astronauts, government officials, and executives from large corporations, everywhere--quite a weekend!!

LPA COOKBOOKS FOR SALE--do you have yours?? If not, contact GEORGIA GUILD (213, 848-4106) and she will see that you get one. They are selling for $8.00--monies go for a good cause; the Little People of America Foundation.

DISTRICT 12 is running ahead of DISTRICT 2 regarding membership by 33 members. We now have 373 members, and we have some more to send in. Pay up folks--let's be No. 1--and let's see how far-r-r ahead we can get!!!

PHILOSOPHER AL (from HIGH POINT--West Point Highland Falls Rotary Clubs May '81 paper) "Better to have loved a short person than never to have loved a tall."

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HAZEL RESMONDO, Hawthorne, went to Liberal, Kansas June 8 for a ceremony and celebration there June 11-13 in regards to opening of Dorothy's House (from the WIZARD OF OZ). One of the yellow bricks being placed there has her name on it as she is one of the original cast from this famous movie! The Governor of Kansas was there--hotel accommodations were furnished. We need to get with Hazel--she should be back--and get more details, and maybe she has pictures to share. Sounds great--and a real part of LPA history. And now the movie UNDER THE RAINBOW is coming out--it's a story based on when the little people got together for the making of the WIZARD OF OZ--and perhaps the RAINBOW story turned out a little wilder than what actually took place...yes, perhaps....

Promotional film of "UNDER THE RAINBOW" is now in some of the theaters--have heard a couple of comments from people here at work--they are looking forward to the picture! It's coming out July 31, for real, they say! The Bartys have a copy of promotional poster--everyone is busy checking to see if they can find themselves pictured....

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